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SO-CALLED REBELS



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SO-CALLED REBELS

A Record of Recent Events in the Diocese of Birmingham

BY THE

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PREFACE

THE publication of this volume would hardly be justified if the events described in it were solely of local interest. No good purpose can ever be served by attempting to perpetuate a mere family quarrel. The dispute between the Bishop of Birmingham and certain of his clergy, however, has attained a world-wide publicity, and has had no inconsiderable bearing upon the history of the development of opinion in the Church of England during the past five years.

Up to the present time, any one who wished to understand the causes of the trouble, to trace its developments from the beginning, and to estimate its effect upon the Church at large, would have had to search through innumerable newspaper files ; a task involving a considerable expenditure of time and energy. This book has been written with the object of remedying this defect, and of providing a permanent record of what happened.

The authors were both ordained by Bishop Gore, and have spent the whole of their ministerial life, extending over more than twenty years, in the Diocese of Birmingham. They feel, therefore,

that they may fairly claim to have an intimate knowledge, not only of the matters they describe, but also of the conditions which prevailed before Dr. Barnes was appointed to the see. They offer their book to the interested reader in the hope that he may find therein a clear and connected record of events ; and that the detailed story may help him to form an accurate estimate of the importance and rights of the controversy.

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‘ But Peter and John answered and said unto them,
Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken
unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we
cannot but speak the things which we have seen and
heard ’ (*Acts* iv. 19, 20).

SO-CALLED REBELS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE See of Birmingham was founded twenty-five years ago, and it came into existence mainly through the energy and enthusiasm of Dr. Charles Gore. A scheme for the establishment of a separate diocese was initiated so early as 1888, by Dr. Philpott, then Bishop of Worcester ; but it was allowed to fall into abeyance under his immediate successor. When Dr. Gore was consecrated to Worcester in 1902, he at once revived the scheme, and his efforts were so successful that, three years later, the Diocese of Birmingham was established, and on March 2, 1905, Dr. Gore was enthroned as the first Bishop.

It is difficult for those of us who live in Birmingham to realize that Dr. Gore was our diocesan for only six years ; so deeply did his strong personality impress itself upon both the Church and social life of the city. This statement may be illustrated by an anecdote which has circulated widely in the Midlands. The story goes that a stranger

inquired of a policeman whether this, indicating S. Philip's church, was 'the Protestant Cathedral.' 'No,' replied the officer, 'it is the Catholic Cathedral ; but it was Protestant before Bishop Gore came here !'

It must not be supposed, however, from this that the Bishop unduly favoured Catholic Churchmen ; it is generally agreed that he was scrupulously fair in the administration of his diocese. His policy in Church affairs was perfectly definite and clearly defined. He believed in the comprehensiveness of the Church of England, but he was equally certain that this comprehensiveness had its limits. He disliked extremes in whatever direction they might lie, and he was prepared to exercise his episcopal authority impartially, if the limits he imposed were exceeded. Whatever disciplinary action the Bishop took, and he always took it with the greatest reluctance, was based upon his conviction that the essential unity of the Church of England could only be maintained, provided that all parties were willing to waive their personal predilections for the good of the whole Church.

In his attitude towards the Anglo-Catholics in his diocese the Bishop was distinctly sympathetic ; but he never for a moment forgot that he himself was 'a man under authority,' and was consistently cautious and sparing in his exercise of the Bishop's

jus liturgicum. He appointed appropriate Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for use on the 'black letter' saints' days, and issued printed forms of service for special occasions, including Vespers of the Blessed Sacrament and Vespers of the Departed. These authorized services were widely used in the diocese.

The question of Reservation had to be dealt with by Dr. Gore, and in order to appreciate his attitude it is necessary to understand something of the conditions which prevailed. The teaching of the Catholic Faith, in the past, had been a tremendous up-hill struggle ; for Birmingham has a strong Nonconformist tradition dating from the days of the Five Mile Act. Bitter opposition was experienced ; Dr. Enraght had been sent to prison, and the Brothers Pollock stoned in the streets. When Dr. Gore was made Bishop of Birmingham, all active hostility had ceased, and the Faith was being quietly taught in numbers of churches. With this more settled state of affairs there came a recognition, amongst both the clergy and the laity, of the need for the continuous reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Dr. Gore was feeling his way in a new and difficult diocese, and it is not surprising that his attitude at first was one of extreme caution. He was willing to grant Reservation under certain restrictions which he deemed necessary under the

circumstances. He was approached by the then Vicar of S. Alban's, Bordesley, on the matter, and expressed himself unwilling to sanction Reservation in a tabernacle in the church. He suggested, however, that a chapel should be provided in a mission house in the parish, which was occupied by the Sisters of the Holy Name. His suggestion was accepted by the Vicar, and Dr. Gore very kindly presented the altar and tabernacle as a personal gift. The fact that the Blessed Sacrament was reserved at S. Alban's soon became widely known, and the need for perpetual Reservation was quickly apparent. Continual and increasing requests were made to the S. Alban's clergy, in cases of emergency, for the use of the reserved Elements ; and the demands became so frequent that they caused serious inconvenience. The matter was once more referred to the Bishop, and he was asked to extend the facilities for Reservation. The whole question was receiving his serious and, we have reason to believe, favourable consideration when he was translated to the See of Oxford.

Bishop Gore's six years' work in the Diocese of Birmingham is admirably summarized in the following appreciation, which appeared in the *Birmingham Diocesan Calendar* for 1912 :

‘ He was distinguished,’ the anonymous writer says, ‘ for his fatherly relations with his clergy, his dealings with candidates

for ordination, his munificence, and the force of his example of simplicity of life and devotion to work, which enabled him to get the best work out of other men. Nor must we omit his considered schemes for improving the conditions of life among the poor. . . . The work which he accomplished in Birmingham was to lay, well and truly, the foundations of a compact, well-ordered city-diocese, and to leave behind him the memory of inspiring teaching and a high example of fatherly rule and personal service.'

Dr. Russell Wakefield, then Dean of Norwich, was appointed successor to Bishop Gore, and was enthroned at the pro-Cathedral of S. Philip on November 17, 1911. His task of carrying on the work, so admirably begun by his predecessor, presented many difficulties ; but he at once set himself to grapple with them. His consistent policy was to establish a personal and, whenever possible, an intimate contact between his clergy and himself. In the early days of his episcopate, it was his custom, so often as he had a free Sunday, to pay an informal visit to some church in the city, and to take part in the service as a member of the congregation. In this way he obtained a first-hand knowledge of the work which was being done in the diocese, and the difficulties with which some of his clergy had to contend. He was always ready with his sympathy and advice when he became aware of such difficulties, and he encouraged confidences.

Another distinctive feature of his earlier efforts was his desire to establish a good understanding

between all schools of thought. In order to further this purpose, he called a Round Table Conference, which was composed of representative clergy in the diocese. This conference met regularly for several months, and the most controversial subjects were discussed frankly, and without any trace of party feeling or bitterness. No definite objective was aimed at in these meetings, but the general result was all to the good. A real sense of fellowship and mutual understanding developed amongst all parties in the Church in Birmingham ; and, although differences continued to exist, as they had done before the meetings were held, a 'sweet reasonableness' was evident on all sides. We were honestly trying to understand each other, and we learned to respect those from whom we differed.

It can be said without exaggeration that at this time the diocese was in a true sense harmonious, and united in its common aim to further the kingdom of God. We emphasize this because the unfortunate impression has been created that during Dr. Wakefield's episcopate the internal affairs of the diocese were in a state of chaos. There was throughout the diocese a frank recognition of differences in our presentation of the Faith, but an entire absence of personal recrimination or party feuds. Anglo-Catholics took their full share in the work of the diocese, they were fully repre-

sented on the various diocesan committees, and united in that work in perfect harmony with all other schools of thought.

We have now to consider Dr. Wakefield's attitude on the question of Reservation. The negotiations which, as we have mentioned, were begun under Bishop Gore, were resumed with his successor, and a final settlement was reached after a series of conferences and personal interviews. A good deal of misunderstanding has arisen as to what Dr. Wakefield actually allowed, and it may be well to quote here, *in extenso*, the Bishop's own explanation of his action. This was prepared by him nearly five years ago, and appeared as a communication to the *Church Times*.¹ It reads as follows :

When I went to Birmingham as bishop I found certain matters of which I could not approve, and with which I had to deal. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved in vestries and such-like places, and I felt that if there was to be Reservation it should be in an orderly and dignified way. I also felt that it should be clear to people that the Presence of our Lord in the Sacrament whilst real was spiritual.

I thought that the services of Benediction and Exposition might lead to abuse, and I thought it was necessary to let the clergy know that I could not allow them. I felt and I feel still that a bishop has power to say in what manner Reservation shall be carried out, though I do not consider that he can refuse to allow the practice altogether. Therefore, in my judgement, a bishop can forbid what is called Devotions, though I know perfectly well that the Birmingham clergy who have had such a

¹ October 23, 1925.

service have no desire whatever to materialize the spiritual Presence of our Lord in the Sacrament by having a set form of prayers to be used in the part of the church where the Reserved Sacrament is placed.

My first knowledge of there being prayers before the Presence was when during the great war I found hundreds of people in church praying together for our sailors and soldiers who were fighting for us, with special reference to relatives and friends for whom they were anxious to speak to God the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. I was not going to come down with a heavy hand upon such devotions at such a time. I knew that no disloyalty to our Church teaching was intended, and I also knew that the most likely way to drive people out of our Church was to run counter to the natural longing to use our churches for the seeking of spiritual comfort in those terribly dark and anxious days.

Frankly, I think that there was more danger of excess in worship and in supplication if every clergyman could be a law to himself as to what prayers he should use, though no actual form of Devotions was ever officially approved in my diocese. Let me once and for all time accept the responsibility for allowing Reservation, for forbidding Benediction and Exposition, and for permitting prayers in the part of the church where the Reserved Sacrament was placed.

As to the loyalty of the clergy, I can only say that it was in my time real and unswerving on all sides. We neither had partisans of the Roman Catholic Church nor Modernists who whittled away any article of the Nicene Creed. The fairness to their brothers of every section was as remarkable on the side of the Evangelicals as on the side of the so-called Anglo-Catholics. Indeed, the Evangelicals were true Catholics and the Anglo-Catholics true Evangelicals.

May one venture a word of advice? The bishops are this month trying to guide us all for the future, and I thank God for the quality of our diocesan episcopate. First, a word to our younger clergy. They are sometimes a little impatient and rather over-confident that they are infallible in judgement. I have been through that stage. I remember when we at Cuddesdon settled everything, and were not very pleased with the action

of two great dignitaries, called by us somewhat disrespectfully Tait and Thomson.

Now that some of us look back, we marvel at the development in Church worship, and we realize how the Spirit of God has been at work. We have become old stagers, and we are some of us sorry that we had not more faith and less self-confidence. Then, to turn to the older men. May we now be generous to the younger clergy? After all it is because, at the worst, of over-hasty enthusiasm that some so-called excesses may be spoiling a little fine work being done by devoted men. Fatherliness wins more than stern correspondence.

I would beg all sides to try to heal all divisions so that the work of the Church shall not suffer.

Devotions may be sometimes desirable, but if they are yielded up, the Presence of Christ is still in the Sacrament, and, after all, that is the essential matter. The meaning of Reservation may sometimes be a little exaggerated, but it is a means whereby many souls are strengthened. I am but a name to Birmingham now, but I shall consider my work there, when we were all so united, a failure, indeed, if my earnest and most learned successor and his flock, my dearly-loved clergy, are not quickly absolutely one in service. Pardon this long letter, but my heart is warm in the cause about which I have written.

Before commenting upon this letter it may be well to state here that during Bishop Wakefield's episcopate the usual method employed in reserving the Blessed Sacrament was in a tabernacle over the altar in a convenient side-chapel; and the Bishop, or one of the archdeacons, was notified as to the arrangements which had been made. So far as we have been able to ascertain, about twenty-two churches in the diocese had perpetual Reservation at the time of the Bishop's resignation, and we do not know of a single church where the

Blessed Sacrament was reserved without the Bishop's full knowledge and approval.

The reference to the service of 'Devotions' calls for some explanation. In the early days of the War, the Anglo-Catholic clergy found that their people derived great help and consolation from special services of intercession. Most of us received long lists of the names of those who had joined the Forces, and we were asked to offer these names in intercession at suitable times. It thus came about that week-day evening services were arranged in which intercessory prayers played a large part ; and it was only natural that these services should be held in the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. In this way the service of 'Devotions' became exceedingly popular, and supplied a real and immediate need.

The service itself was usually of a very simple nature. It began with the hymn 'O Saving Victim' ; one of the metrical litanies from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* or *The English Hymnal* was then sung, followed by another hymn ; an appropriate collect, Psalm cxvii, and the Divine Praises were usually added ; and the service concluded with the special War intercessions. The candles were lighted on the altar, and incense was used at the beginning and end of the service ; but it was not customary either to remove the Blessed

Sacrament from the altar, or to expose it in a monstrance, or to give Benediction.

The Bishop was aware of the use of this service in certain churches in his diocese, and on May 25, 1917, he called the incumbents concerned to a conference at Bishop's Croft. Both of the writers of this volume were present at the discussion, and they remember clearly the frank and friendly manner in which it was conducted on both sides. The clergy explained fully the forms of service used by them in their respective churches, and the Bishop asked many questions regarding details. At the end of a long meeting, the Bishop asked us if we were prepared to observe the following conditions which he proposed to lay down, if the service of 'Devotions' were to be continued. He stipulated (i) that there should be no Exposition, i.e. that the Holy Sacrament should not be shown to the people in a monstrance ; (ii) that there should be no Benediction, i.e. that the people should not be blessed with the Holy Sacrament ; and (iii) that we should use the form of service we had described to him fully, and no other. To these conditions the clergy present gave their unanimous and solemn assent, and they loyally kept their promise.¹

An account of Bishop Wakefield's episcopate would not be complete without some reference

¹ This question is referred to again on p. 35.

to the First Birmingham and Midland Anglo-Catholic Congress, which was held in June, 1922. This Congress made a considerable impression upon the citizens of Birmingham, and provided further evidence of the kindly interest taken by the Bishop in the Catholic Movement. The Congress lasted for three days, and was held in the Town Hall. It opened with a procession of robed clergy from the Town Hall to the Cathedral, where High Mass was celebrated in the presence of the Bishop. Full Catholic ceremonial was observed, including the use of incense, and the Bishop performed the functions proper to a diocesan assisting in such a service in his own diocese. The use of the Cathedral was made possible by the kindness of the rector, Bishop Hamilton Baynes.

The first public meeting, in the afternoon of the same day, was held under the presidency of the Bishop, and most of the leading officials of the diocese were on the platform with him. In the course of his presidential address, he expressed his sympathy with the objects of the Congress, and at the same time exhorted us to cultivate breadth of vision, sound learning, and dignity in worship. Towards the conclusion of his speech he told his hearers that 'he did not regard himself as President of the Congress in the ordinary accepted sense of the word. He was there because he had the deepest respect and tenderest affection for many

of those who in the past had built up Anglo-Catholicism as they understood it. He trusted every one of them, and whilst he would gladly see some of the things changed even in their practices, he was going to show to the Church generally that he would stand by men who worked as the Anglo-Catholics did, and in whose loyalty he had confidence.' ¹

This speech, in our opinion, represents most fairly Dr. Wakefield's attitude towards the Anglo-Catholics in his diocese. He was not able, on all occasions, to see eye to eye with them in their aims and ideals ; but he honestly tried to understand their position, and above all things he trusted them and believed in their complete loyalty to the Church of England. It is equally true to say that the clergy, in their turn, fully appreciated the confidence placed in them by their Bishop, and did all in their power to meet his wishes. There was no ' rebellion ' under Dr. Russell Wakefield ; in fact, the friendly relations which always existed between the Anglo-Catholic clergy and their diocesan made the former very slow to realize that the same relations could not be established between themselves and his successor.

Such was the state of affairs in the Diocese of Birmingham when, in 1924, we heard, with the deepest regret, that Dr. Wakefield had resigned his see owing to ill health.

¹ *Birmingham Post*, June 21, 1922.

CHAPTER II

A DECLARATION OF WAR

THE appointment of Dr. Barnes to the Bishopric of Birmingham was the only appointment to the Episcopal Bench made by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald during his first tenure of office as Prime Minister. A good deal of disquiet was caused among Anglo-Catholics by the news of the appointment, since it was well known that the Bishop-designate was not only strongly opposed to Catholic ideals, but that he was prominently associated with the Modern Churchmen's Union. There was a certain amount of outspoken comment, especially in the *Church Times*, and it has often been asserted that Birmingham Anglo-Catholics inspired these criticisms, and ranged themselves in opposition to Dr. Barnes from the moment it was known that he was coming to Birmingham. It was not so. In his sermon at his enthronement, the new Bishop referred to the warm welcome he had received from all parties in the English Church. 'It was perhaps natural,' he said, 'that Liberal Evangelicals should have

sent friendly greetings. But Anglo-Catholics had been generous in offering affectionate loyalty.' In illustration of this, we may quote the following passage from an article by Father Rosenthal in *S. Agatha's Parish Magazine*, of September, 1924:

You will expect me to say something about the appointment of the new bishop. Canon Barnes is a distinguished scholar and scientist, and has had a brilliant career, first at Cambridge, then as Master of the Temple, and latterly as Canon of Westminster, where he has earned a considerable reputation as a preacher. There have been letters in the papers objecting to the appointment on the grounds that Canon Barnes holds unorthodox views, and that he has had no parochial experience. In my judgement, such anticipatory criticism is much to be deprecated, as it makes the position needlessly difficult for every one. We must pray for our bishop, give him a hearty welcome when he comes, and do everything to make his path as smooth as possible. That is good Christianity, and good tactics too, for bishops are human, and respond to kindness and affection like other people.

This was the general attitude of Birmingham Catholics, priests and laity alike. We were disturbed and apprehensive, it is true, but we were most anxious to avoid anything that might prejudice a good understanding between the new Bishop and ourselves.

Dr. Barnes was consecrated on Michaelmas Day, 1924, and enthroned on October 2nd. In his sermon at the enthronement, from which we have already quoted, we heard for the first time the charges of magic with which we have since become so painfully familiar. The following

extract from the sermon is taken from a summary in the *Birmingham Post* :¹

Many among them at the present juncture felt a temptation to depart from old-time ways and beliefs. The war had produced spiritual dissatisfaction ; disturbance of habit ; desire for change. Acute observers prophesied that at its close there would be a revival of less worthy forms of religion. They must guard . . . against a pagan sacramentalism which had entered into the Latin Catholicism, and pretended that they could create the Bread of Salvation by some magic of ritual and formula.

We went home from the Cathedral disheartened and saddened, for we had been given a very plain indication that our most cherished convictions would receive no sympathy or encouragement from our new Bishop. Nevertheless, we were determined to do everything in our power to show that we earnestly desired to maintain the same harmony and co-operation with our diocesan as had marked our happy relations with his predecessor. An opportunity for acting in this spirit was ready to our hand, for at the time of the enthronement the Birmingham Anglo-Catholic Congress Committee was arranging a united service of thanksgiving for the Catholic Revival in Birmingham, in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Dr. Oldknow. It had always been our custom to invite the Bishop of the diocese to our united services and meetings, and the Committee felt that it would be only courteous

¹ October 3, 1924.

and right that a similar invitation should be addressed to the new Bishop. Father Rosenthal, as Chairman of the Committee, therefore wrote to the Bishop, cordially inviting him to be present, and adding that it would be difficult to exaggerate the unifying influence that his presence would have.

A fortnight passed without any reply, and on the day before the service was held the following letter, addressed to Father Rosenthal, appeared in the *Birmingham Gazette*, before it was received by him :

I thank you for the courtesy of your letter. It is with regret that I must decline your invitation.

I trust that I judge the Anglo-Catholic Movement with the fairness and sympathy with which I would approach all modes of presenting the Christian Faith. I would assure you that I do not undervalue the religious earnestness which is the main element of worth within the Movement. In so far as such earnestness has shown itself in large-hearted sympathy for the poor and oppressed, and in enthusiasm for social righteousness, I welcome it cordially. I recognize, moreover, that people differ so much in temperament that they are attracted by different types of worship. The Church of England has always at its best been inclusive rather than exclusive ; its members ought to be tolerant with regard to minor differences of doctrine and worship which involve no serious departure from the position laid down in the Prayer Book and Articles. Especially should we show such tolerance at the present time, when thought is both active and progressive, and when new knowledge makes necessary some measure of theological re-statement. But it is especially important at such a time to avoid the erroneous teaching tending to superstition which naturally arises during a period of religious unrest ; and I cannot feel that your Movement does this with entire success. To describe the erroneous teaching given by

some of your members I will not use my own words. I would, in the first place, remind you of some apposite sentences of the Bishop of Gloucester, a High Churchman, and one of the most distinguished of living theologians. In his recent Visitation Charge we read : 'The doctrine of the Apostolic Succession is taught in a mechanical way. Grace is said to have come down from the Apostles by the golden channel of the laying on of hands. And it is implied that, except in that way, the gift of the Holy Spirit is not given. . . . We are told that the priest has the power of making the body and blood of Christ. Now all language like this is most harmful. It is bad theology. It suggests a mechanical idea of Sacrament and divine grace. It puts stumbling-blocks in the way of many people. It is saying what the majority of people can't believe, and won't believe, and ought not to believe.'

In connection with the bad theology of which Dr. Headlam writes, some in your Movement have introduced the practice of Reservation, for purposes other than communicating the sick who are unable to come to church. I regret to learn that in some churches of this diocese illegal receptacles called tabernacles have been placed. In them, the consecrated elements are kept, whereas it is ordered by the rules of our Church that those elements should be at once consumed after the Communion Service. As bishop I deplore the illegality and still more the false doctrine which lies behind it. The traditional teaching of the English Church in this matter has recently been lucidly expressed by Canon Storr, whose learning and loyal churchmanship are alike indisputable. 'As thinking people we cannot accept the theology which underlies the practice of Reservation. Reservation was not heard of until the doctrine of Transubstantiation was propounded. It is a direct outcome of the Roman theory. . . . The practice of Reservation tends to foster superstition. Why stop at adoration of the Reserved Sacrament ? Why not renew the practice of earlier days and carry it with you as a charm against sickness ? We are told it is a help to devotion. I do not deny that it may be for some : but the help is gained at the expense of truth.' And Canon Storr concludes with the emphatic and true statement : 'A prayer in a barn is as valuable and as potent with God as a prayer before a tabernacle.'

I would not have it appear that, in thus condemning certain aspects of the Anglo-Catholic Movement, I despair of its future. Religious zeal, unless purified by quiet thought, is often extravagant. But tides ebb as rapidly as they flow. I still hope that the leaders of Anglo-Catholicism will abandon the illegalities and false doctrine by which it is harmed, and join with other parties in the Church of England to spread the Spirit of Christ. We need to combine enthusiasm with sound doctrine, and to unite devotion to Christ with a faith which reason can justify. Internal dissensions are a source of grave weakness. They hinder us from preaching the Gospel with united zeal. None can doubt the urgent need of that combined witness for Christ, which, as a Church, we ought to be able to give. Cannot Anglo-Catholicism free itself from error, while continuing to kindle the spirit of devotion by rich and beautiful worship? It would thus make a distinctive contribution to our corporate life, and as bishop, I could give it sincere approval.

As my reply is a considered statement, I am communicating it to the Press.

By some strange mental process the Protestant Press regarded our invitation as an attack on the Bishop; for example, the *Church of England Newspaper*¹ spoke of 'a worked-up agitation of a group of so-called Anglo-Catholics,' and congratulated the Bishop of Birmingham upon 'his outstanding courage and his commendable frankness, combined with a Christian charity, which we have learnt to expect from Dr. Barnes.' A very different point of view, however, was expressed in a leading article in the *Guardian*,² which made the following comment on the Bishop's letter :

It is with the greatest regret that we feel obliged to express our

¹ December 3, 1924.

² December 5, 1924.

disagreement with the bishop, both as to the manner and the matter of his letter to Mr. Rosenthal. . . . A secular press is not the medium through which a newly-appointed bishop should express his dissent from the opinion of a body of his priests. . . . The bishop could have summoned his Synod, and have met his priests within closed doors; he could have consulted them intimately; he could have opened his heart to them on the particular matters in which he disagrees with the Anglo-Catholic Party. Had he done this, he might have failed to secure agreement with his opinions, but he would have won their respect and their affection, which, as all the world knows, is half-way to securing loyalty and assent. It is strange that a bishop should have so soon forgotten that in spite of considerable pressure the leading priests of the Anglo-Catholic party in his diocese refused to pay any attention to the suggestions that they should criticize their bishop before he had spoken to them. Can we wonder at the sharpness of their retort when they have found themselves denounced in the *Birmingham Gazette* as upholders of 'illegalities and false doctrine,' and as men who depart 'from the position laid down in the Prayer Book and Articles.' Or at their astonishment that such a method should be chosen by the bishop to express dissent from practices, some at least of which were sanctioned, if we are rightly informed, by two previous holders of the see.

Very wide publicity was given to Dr. Barnes' letter, and coming, as it did, at the very beginning of his episcopate, it was everywhere regarded as a declaration of war. It was clear to us that the issues raised had far more than a local importance, and that they affected the whole Catholic Movement throughout the country. We therefore decided to consult the English Church Union, who appointed an Emergency Committee to act with us in any steps that we considered necessary. As a

result of the co-operation and advice of this Committee, the following reply was sent by Father Rosenthal to the Bishop :¹

The Birmingham Regional Committee of the Anglo-Catholic Congress Movement has given careful consideration to your letter dated November 25th, and feels bound to make some reply to certain statements which are contained in it.

After some general remarks, in which we notice an implied deprecation of any serious departure from the position laid down in the Prayer Book and Articles, you accuse 'some' of our 'members' of 'erroneous teaching tending to superstition' and of 'false doctrine.' Such accusations (especially when made by a bishop against the priests of his own diocese) would be universally admitted to be of the most wantonly hurtful and uncharitable kind, unless sustained by serious proof. It is necessary, therefore, for us briefly to examine the evidence which you bring in support of so grave an attack.

You first quote a passage from the recent Visitation Charge of the Bishop of Gloucester, which was published under the title *The Church of England*. For the sake of clearness, we reproduce this passage in the form in which you cite it :

'The doctrine of the Apostolic Succession is taught in a mechanical way. Grace is said to have come down from the Apostles by the golden channel of the laying on of hands. And it is implied that, except in that way, the gift of the Holy Spirit is not given. . . . We are told that the priest has the power of making the body and blood of Christ. Now all language like this is most harmful. It is bad theology, it suggests a mechanical idea of sacrament and divine grace, it puts stumbling-blocks in the way of many people, it is saying what the majority of people can't believe, and won't believe, and ought not to believe.

At the right time we could say much in regard to the supposition that our ideas are 'mechanical'; but we may limit ourselves here to two remarks about your use of the above

¹ *Birmingham Post*, December 8, 1924.

quotations from the Bishop of Gloucester. Our first comment must be made with much regret. The fourth sentence in the quotation : ' We are told that the priest,' etc., is introduced by a row of dots, marking an omission in the quotation. No one unfamiliar with the passage in the Bishop of Gloucester's charge would imagine that the dots stand for words which, if printed in full, would make it clear that the sentence—' We are told that the priest,' etc.,—was meant by the Bishop of Gloucester to describe not the teaching of Catholics in the Church of England, but the teaching or phraseology of English Roman Catholics. Astonishing as it may seem, this is actually the case. The suppressed words which introduce the sentence are—' We have similar uneducated language among English Roman Catholics, as for example when ' (*The Church of England*, p. 67), and they obviously give a meaning to the words which you quote entirely different from that which you assign to them. We do not suppose that you had any intention of falsifying the quotation ; but we cannot forbear from observing that it would have been well to verify the passage before allowing it to appear in print.

Our second comment is of greater importance. Your quotation from the Bishop of Gloucester introduces what appears to constitute the main body of your accusation—namely an attack both upon the ancient and Catholic practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament, and upon the doctrine which underlies Reservation. We observe that it is not only some particular custom connected with the use of the Reserved Sacrament, but Reservation itself, which you condemn ; for you pass on from ' the practice of Reservation for purposes other than communicating the sick who are unable to come to church,' to an appeal to ' the rules of our Church that these elements should be at once consumed after the Communion Service,' and you speak of ' the false doctrine which lies behind.' But this part of your accusation deprives you of the authority which you claim from the Bishop of Gloucester. For the Bishop of Gloucester, in the same charge as that from which you quote, has sanctioned methods of Reservation. His words are :

To take the Communion directly from the service in church to a sick person unites him spiritually with the action

of the church, and preserves the idea of Communion. I am quite ready to give leave for such Reservation. I am further asked for permission for temporary Reservation. It is pointed out that it is hardly possible to communicate sick persons in many cases directly after the service ; I have been, therefore, asked to agree to temporary Reservation, and the provision in the church of a suitable place for this purpose. To this I have consented in places where the need has been made plain. I am also of opinion that in the chapel of a hospital, or where there is a similar need, perpetual Reservation may legitimately be allowed, and if the same request were made to me in regard to any parish church, I should consider the matter on its merits (*The Church of England*, pp. 102, 103).

We do not pretend to agree with all that the Bishop of Gloucester has written on the subject of Reservation ; but it is clear from the words which we have quoted that he is prepared to sanction what you describe as an ' illegality ' with a ' false doctrine ' lying behind it.

The quotation from the Bishop of Gloucester in your letter is followed by a quotation from Canon Storr. We have been unable to discover the source of the quotation, and consequently have not been able to examine the context of the sentences which you cite. But as the quotation stands in your letter, referring to Reservation itself, and not merely to some custom in regard to the Reserved Sacrament, it contains a gross historical blunder. ' Reservation,' it is said, ' was not heard of until the doctrine of Transubstantiation was propounded.' It is, of course, well known to all who have studied the history of the Church that Reservation was practised from the second century onwards, and that the philosophical theory respecting the mode of the Eucharistic Presence which is known as ' Transubstantiation ' was first propounded by Paschasius Radbertus, in the ninth century, and was not fully developed till much later. The doctrine underlying the practice of Reservation is not the theory of Transubstantiation, but the truth that the bread and wine become, by consecration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Your objection, therefore, is not against the theory of Transubstantiation, but against the truth of our

Lord's Presence in the Sacrament. Further comment on these points is probably needless, though it may be worth while to observe that the final sentence which you quote from Canon Storr, 'A prayer in a barn is as valuable and as potent with God as a prayer before the tabernacle,' appears to us not only true, but a truism of the most obvious kind.

In speaking about Reservation, you say, as we have already mentioned, that 'it is ordered by the rules of our Church that these elements should be at once consumed after the Communion Service.' You refer, we presume, to the sixth rubric at the end of the Order of Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer. But it can hardly have escaped your notice that the modern interpretation of this rubric as forbidding Reservation has been repeatedly challenged. The rubric was added in 1661 without any reference to Reservation, but to prevent the abuse of the consecrated Sacrament being used for ordinary food. The practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament has now been restored in the Church of England for well-nigh seventy years, without any idea on the part of those who have adopted it that they were contravening the rubric. The presence of the rubric in one of the two Liturgies used in the Scottish Church (the English Communion Office) has never been thought inconsistent with a note in the other Liturgy which is there in use (the Scottish Communion Office) recognizing the lawfulness of Reservation. And the language of the rubric closely resembles, and probably was based upon, the well-known provision of the Western canon law enjoining the reverent consumption of what remained after the distribution of Communion (*decretum* iii, *de consecr.* dist. 2, cap. 23), a provision which admittedly co-existed with the universal prevalence of Reservation (compare Lyndwood, *Provinciale*, iii. 26).

We repudiate the accusations of 'illegality' and 'false doctrine.' We believe that the doctrine underlying the custom of Reservation is the true Christian doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, which goes back through the tradition of the centuries to the words of our Lord Himself; and that Reservation cannot be treated as illegal in the English Church.

We wish that we could stop here. But, since the question of false doctrine has been raised, we cannot. We trust that we

are free from any wish merely to retort. We had hoped to put aside all that gravely disquieted us when we first heard that you were to be our bishop; to ignore as mere indiscretions what had seemed to us false doctrine of the most deadly kind, touching the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Fall (see e.g. *The Modern Churchman*, September, 1921, pp. 257, 345; *The Times*, August 30, 1920, p. 7). Even until we saw your letter, we would fain have forgotten utterances, of which the last is that you 'contemplate the ultimate revision of the creeds' (Foreword to W. Laurence, *Fifty Years*, p. xxix). We made a genuine and serious effort to be in the right relation to you as our bishop. We hoped that we might be as friendly with you as we were with your predecessor, who was far from agreeing with us in many respects, but who treated us with a courtesy, a generosity, and an affection which we shall not soon forget. Your letter has made difficulties for us which it is not easy for us to describe. We shall not cease to pray for you as our bishop, especially when we stand at the altar in the most solemn moments of our lives. But your letter leaves us unconvinced that you understand our position, or that your policy is based on a right apprehension of Christian truth.

We could have wished that any correspondence between you and ourselves of an argumentative character might have been private, and that the scandal of public discussion might have been avoided. But, since your letter has been sent to the public Press, it is necessary for us to follow your example, and publish this letter also.

I write as chairman of the Birmingham Regional Committee of the Anglo-Catholic Congress Movement, and on behalf of that body; but I am authorized to say that this letter has the approval also of the English Church Union and the Federation of Catholic Priests.

CHAPTER III

THE BREACH WIDENS

THE conflict which began in the circumstances we have described, and which has proceeded without intermission to the present time, has had one particular characteristic, which must surely be unique in the history of such disputes. During the whole period there has been no meeting of any kind between the Bishop and representatives of our group. In the early stages of the dispute, it was generally hoped and expected that he would call us together. A public expression of this hope was given by Father Rosenthal in a letter to *The Times* of December 22, 1924, in the course of which he said: 'The difficulties of the situation . . . can be surmounted only by mutual knowledge and goodwill. May I once more urge that if the Bishop would meet us, and talk over the whole position in a friendly way, he would find us neither unreasonable nor unsympathetic? Such a meeting must come sooner or later if an end is to be put to a situation which all who care for the welfare of the Church in Birmingham must unfeignedly

deplore.' This suggestion was strongly supported in the *Guardian*, in an editorial note which deplored the continuance of controversy in the Press, and urged that the time had come for a *rapprochement* to be attempted between the two parties.¹

Not only has no such conference ever taken place, but it has been the rarest event for any of us to be invited to Bishop's Croft for a personal interview. Of the two writers of this book, one has met the Bishop from time to time officially at meetings of the Cathedral Chapter, but has had only one personal conversation with him, arising out of a matter which had no relation to this controversy ; the other has never met him at all. Moreover, since the Bishop refuses to visit our churches, either to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation or for any other purpose, it follows that our lay-folk are as completely out of touch with him as we are. The consequences of this complete absence of personal communication have been deplorable. On the one hand, our resistance to the Bishop's demands has been reinforced by the sense of unjust treatment which ostracism always produces. On the other, the Bishop has never had any first-hand information about our beliefs and practices, but has had to depend on hearsay evidence. As a result, his prejudices have become

¹ December 24, 1924.

strengthened and confirmed, as generally happens to those who get their information at second-hand.

The first administrative matter about which difficulty arose was the question of the licensing of the Rev. Cyril Brown to the incumbency of the newly-created parish of S. Gregory the Great, Small Heath. Father Brown had been given the charge of S. Gregory's, then a Conventional District, by Bishop Wakefield, in 1918, on the distinct understanding that he was to be the first Vicar. The new parish was constituted by Order in Council on October 14, 1924, i.e. only a few days after the new Bishop's enthronement. Owing to the fact that the patronage had been vested, for the first time, in a former Vicar of the mother church, who had lately died, a technical question arose as to whether Father Brown as Priest-in-Charge became *ipso facto* the Vicar by virtue of the Order in Council, or whether the presentation lapsed to the Bishop. Meanwhile, the Bishop was unwilling to license him, because the Blessed Sacrament was reserved at S. Gregory's.

A correspondence ensued which was protracted over five months. In the course of it, Father Brown emphasized the fact that Reservation had been practised at S. Gregory's from the beginning, and further gave proof that the Blessed Sacrament

was reserved in a tabernacle at the time when the new church was consecrated. The Bishop at long last consented to institute him in his private chapel, but under protest. 'I am led,' he wrote, 'to take this action because my refusal might end in a law-suit, which would, although my action would be upheld, do harm to the Church. . . . I shall continue to hope and pray that your views may so change that you are led to conform to the law and doctrine of the Church of England. I feel that as bishop I have done all that I can to persuade you that such conformity is your duty. Some will think me remiss in not seeking to enforce the law ; to them, I can only reply that I feel compelled to avoid the scandal caused by possible litigation.'

Another clash immediately followed, which was to have far more serious consequences. At the beginning of 1925 the Rev. Kenneth Rawlings, Vicar of S. Mark's, Washwood Heath, was offered the living of S. Michael's, Lewes. In view of the trouble at S. Gregory's, which was at that time still unsettled, Father Rawlings realized that there might be some difficulty in filling the appointment to S. Mark's. He therefore consulted the Rev. H. D. Neison, the Vicar of Saltley and Rural Dean of East Birmingham, who was patron of the living of S. Mark's, in order to ascertain what he ought to do. Father Neison had an interview with the

Bishop, partly on Father Rawling's behalf, and partly to ascertain how best to fill the appointment without causing difficulties in the diocese. Subsequent correspondence showed that there was a difference of opinion between the Bishop and the patron as to what actually happened at this interview. The patron, at a later stage, issued a public statement, in which he declared emphatically that he suggested to the Bishop the name of Father Bennett, then assistant priest of S. Jude's, Birmingham, and asked whether he would institute him, if the living became vacant. 'The Bishop,' said the patron in his statement, 'himself brought up the difficulty at S. Gregory's, which was then pending, and said that he could not institute publicly to such a church, but he undertook to institute privately. He gave as his reason for this, that a public institution would mean going to the church and seeing things of which he could not approve. To make sure, both for Father Rawling's sake as well as for the peace of the diocese, I asked again, "Then, if I nominate Father Bennett for S. Mark's, when the living is vacant, you will be prepared to institute him privately?"' The Bishop replied that he would do so in this case, as he would have to do so in the case of S. Gregory's. It was on the assurance thus given that I advised Father Rawlings not to cancel his acceptance of S. Michael's, Lewes, and

prepared the nomination form for Father Bennett's presentation to S. Mark's.'¹

That Father Neison's recollection of the interview was not mistaken is borne out by the fact that, in due course, the Bishop's legal secretary posted the legal notice of the Bishop's intention to institute Father Bennett to S. Mark's. Nevertheless, on May 19th the Vicar-designate received a letter from Dr. Barnes in which the latter stated that he refused to license him to the church, unless he removed the tabernacle and discontinued the practice of Reservation. The Bishop continued: 'If you are unwilling to do this, I will not license you, either publicly or privately, save after an intimation from the patron that if I do not he will take legal action to force me. If he gives such intimation, I shall then, to avoid legal action, license you privately in the chapel here.'

The patron at once wrote to the Bishop reminding him of the details of the interview at which he had undertaken to institute privately, and asking him if anything had happened to make him alter his intention. No reply was received to this, or to several subsequent letters to the same effect, until some two months later when the Bishop wrote denying for the first time the validity of Father Neison's account of the interview, and stating that he intended to persist in his refusal to institute

¹ *Birmingham Post*, September 11, 1925.

‘until the receipt of a letter from your solicitors show that I must yield, or be a party to legal proceedings.’ Meanwhile, Father Bennett had written to the Bishop saying that, while perfectly willing to make the statutory declarations, he was conscientiously unable to give the further undertaking now demanded.

The patron felt that, much as he disliked the idea of appealing to the Courts, fairness to Father Bennett seemed to require that he should comply with the Bishop’s condition. He therefore instructed a well-known firm of London solicitors to write to the Bishop asking for a date for institution, or, in the event of refusal to institute, acceptance of intention to take legal proceedings. No reply was received to this communication, and the *impasse* continued throughout the summer.

In the month of October the Churchwardens of S. Mark’s presented to Dr. Barnes a petition signed by over two thousand parishioners begging their diocesan to institute Father Bennett as Vicar of the parish. In reply to this impressive petition, the Bishop said that he understood that the Consecrated Elements were reserved in a tabernacle in S. Mark’s, and that this practice, and the services associated with it, involved grave doctrinal errors ; and that he could only institute the Vicar-designate if he gave an undertaking not to continue

the 'illegalities connected with Reservation which had prevailed.'

The Churchwardens then addressed another letter to the Bishop, which is of such value in explaining the situation that we quote it *in extenso* :¹

Further to our formal acknowledgement of your letter of the 30th ult., we beg to make the following comments on the points you raise therein : (1) You say, 'I offered during the vacancy to help you to get clergymen available for occasional duty, stating that naturally I wished to help you in your efforts to promote the true spiritual welfare of the parish. . . . Your reply ignored my offer of aid.' We would point out that this offer was not made by you until the living had been vacant for nearly three months, and that in the meantime (as we informed your lordship) we had been compelled to make such provision as we could for carrying on the usual services. In view of this fact we cannot understand your statement that we ignored your offer of aid.

(2) It is quite true that one of the altars has a tabernacle publicly placed over it in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and, as you have already been informed, a faculty was granted for this by the Chancellor of the Diocese. This appears to us to place the legality of our position in the matter beyond doubt.

(3) You ask whether it is not the case that 'in connection with such reservation public services copied from Roman Catholic usage have been frequent.' As you do not state what those services are, we assume that you refer either to Benediction or Exposition of the Holy Sacrament. Neither of these services is held at S. Mark's. Such extra-liturgical services as are used were sanctioned by your predecessor, Bishop Russell Wakefield.

(4) We feel that it would be quite beyond our province to enter into a theological discussion with your lordship on the question of Transubstantiation. But it is complete news to us that our Church teaches that 'the whole service is the sacrament, and Christ is present there inasmuch as he is present wherever

¹ *Birmingham Post*, October 3, 1925.

two or three are gathered together in his name.' We have always been taught in the words of the Church Catechism that 'the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.'

(5) You remind us that you 'seek to maintain the traditional doctrine and discipline of the Church of England.' This reminder is our justification for saying, with great respect, that many of your public pronouncements since you have been our bishop have deeply shocked the consciences of faithful Churchmen, by seeming to undermine the traditional doctrines you profess to uphold.

(6) The question of what is legal or illegal in the Church of England at the present time seems to be a matter upon which even experts are not agreed. Your predecessor (in common with the bishops of many other dioceses) fully allowed the legality of those very practices you are denouncing as illegal.

(7) You say that 'to bring doctrinal disputes into the law courts seems to me deplorable.' May we remind you that it was you yourself who suggested that a threat of legal proceedings should be made against you. This request you made in a letter to the Rev. H. E. Bennett, dated May 18th, in the following words: 'If you are unwilling to do this [i.e. accede to your lordship's conditions] I will not license you, either publicly or privately, save after an intimation from the patron that if I do not he will take legal action to force me. If he gives such intimation, I shall then, to avoid legal action, license you privately in the chapel here.' In view of this the patron can surely not be blamed for taking the very steps you suggested that he should take. We must say frankly that we are at a loss to understand what you really want.

Dr. Barnes, in replying to this letter, stated that he thought the Churchwardens were probably in error in affirming that his predecessor had sanctioned extra-liturgical Devotions. It must be remembered that these letters were all published in the Press, and those of us who had taken part in

the conference with Bishop Wakefield, which has been referred to in an earlier chapter, felt that it was of the greatest importance to remove any misconception about this matter in the public mind. The two writers of this book, together with the Rev. C. T. Kirtland, Vicar of S. Margaret's, Ladywood, who were the only three priests remaining in the diocese who had been present at the conference, thereupon sent this letter to the *Birmingham Post* :¹

In a letter addressed to the churchwardens of S. Mark's, Washwood Heath, published in your issue of to-day, the Bishop of Birmingham says that he thinks they are in error in stating that the extra-liturgical service known as Devotions was sanctioned by his predecessor.

In so thinking, the Bishop of Birmingham is mistaken. We desire explicitly to state that the sanction for this service was given by Bishop Russell Wakefield at a conference held at Bishop's Croft, on Friday, May 25, 1917, at which we were present. The service of Devotions as used at S. Mark's, and in many other churches in the diocese, is the service as then sanctioned by Bishop Wakefield, and no other. We have all been scrupulously careful to observe exactly the conditions he laid down, and honour our agreement with him.

On October 7th the Bishop wrote as follows to Canon Belton :²

I see that a letter is published in the Press to-day from yourself and others, in which you say that my predecessor at a conference held in 1917 sanctioned the service of Devotions. You state that you have observed exactly the conditions he laid down. Will you kindly send me a copy of the memorandum in which those conditions are embodied ?

¹ October 7, 1925.

² *Birmingham Post*, October 10, 1925.

To this Canon Belton replied on the same day :

I have just received your letter. Under ordinary circumstances I am naturally most desirous to give you any information that is in my power. I would respectfully point out, however, that you simply ask for information, but do not tell me for what purpose you require it. I feel that the most painful and distressing circumstances surrounding the present trouble entitle me to ask, before considering the matter further, for what purpose the information is required.

I am communicating the contents of your letter to the other two incumbents concerned. I am not sending this letter to the Press, as I take it for granted that your letter to me is a personal one.

On the following day the Bishop wrote to Canon Belton :

I did not intend my letter to you to be regarded as in any way personal or private. The letter which you and your friends published in the Press yesterday was a surprise to me, inasmuch as no such permission for Devotions as you say was given by my predecessor has ever been mentioned to me, although controversy concerning illegal services began shortly after I came here. I ask you to be so good as to give me a copy of the memorandum—if there be such—in which were laid down the conditions which you say that you have exactly observed. Such a memorandum, if it exists, is obviously of importance. That it should be published is highly desirable. You can hardly expect me to take cognizance of it in diocesan administration if I am ignorant of its contents.

The following letter was then addressed to the Bishop, signed by the three of us :

You are mistaken in inferring from our letters either to yourself, or to the Press, that your predecessor issued to us any official memorandum of the conference of May 25, 1917. Our relations with Dr. Russell Wakefield rendered such a memorandum quite unnecessary, for we regarded him as our Father in God,

and not as a legal administrator, and loved and trusted him as implicitly as he loved and trusted us.

In view of your statement that you require certain information in order to take cognizance of it in diocesan administration, we are quite willing to give you an account of what took place at the conference.

The bishop called together the clergy concerned in order to discuss with them the service known as Devotions. We described to him fully the form of service used by us. As a result of our conversation, the bishop asked us if we were prepared to observe the following conditions :

(1) That there should be no Exposition, i.e. that the Holy Sacrament should not be shown to the people in a monstrance.

(2) That there should be no Benediction, i.e. that the people should not be blessed with the Holy Sacrament.

(3) That we should use the form of service we had described to him fully, and no other.

To these conditions we gave unanimous and solemn assent, and have loyally kept our promise up to the present time. We have the permission of the Archdeacon of Birmingham, the Ven. C. E. Hopton, to state that in an interview with the bishop shortly after our conference, Dr. Wakefield told the archdeacon that he had interviewed us, and that we had given him our assurance that no service of Exposition or Benediction would be used by us, and that matters were quite satisfactorily arranged.

In view of your statement that you do not wish our communications to be regarded as in any way personal or private, we are sending copies of this correspondence to the Press.

The Bishop then replied to Canon Belton, expressing satisfaction that 'illegal services copied from Roman Catholic usage and known as Exposition and Benediction' were not allowed in the diocese, and asked for copies of the printed forms of the service of Devotions, if such forms were circulated for use of congregations.

On receipt of this letter, Canon Belton tele-

phoned the Bishop requesting an interview, but Dr. Barnes replied that he would much rather keep to writing. Later in the afternoon, he received the following explanatory letter from the Bishop:

With reference to your telephone message of half an hour ago, I hope that it is clear : (i) That I am always pleased to see any of the clergy of the diocese who wish for an interview, and (ii) that I think that a reply to my letter, with regard to which you suggested an interview, had better be in writing. The questions which I asked, as they affect public worship in the Church of England, are of public importance. They arise naturally from the letter sent by you and your friends to the Press last week. The answers to them cannot be held to be a private matter.

Our efforts at a better understanding between the Bishop and ourselves were thus frustrated, and on October 14th we sent him the following reply, which was our final word in the discussion :¹

We note with deep regret your decision that our communications with you must be in writing, and that these communications are to continue to be used as matter for publication in the secular Press. We would wish that our relations with one whom we wish to regard as our Father in God might be on a different basis.

We would point out that our public statement concerning Devotions, to which you refer, was made solely in view of the question you raised as to the accuracy of the information given you by the churchwardens of S. Mark's. We felt that it was our plain duty, in common fairness to them, to make public the circumstances under which your predecessor's permission was given for this service.

To continue public correspondence with you is, however, an entirely different matter. We quite admit that, as our bishop, you have a right to ask questions, and we agree that you are

¹ *Birmingham Post*, October 16, 1925.

entitled to receive answers to them. But we cannot admit that such a right entitles you to publish information so received in the newspapers. Our request that you would grant an interview to one of our number was made with the express purpose of informing you that we are resolved to put an end, so far as we are concerned, to public controversy with you. It is repugnant to our convictions and sense of reverence that questions affecting the most sacred ministrations of religion should be matters of discussion between your priests and their bishop, through the medium of the secular Press. So far from serving any good purpose, such a procedure, we are convinced, only widens the unhappy breach between us, is a source of great distress to all reverent-minded Churchmen, and is a cause of scandal to all those who are not attached to any organized form of religion.

We must therefore, most respectfully, but firmly and finally, ask your lordship to excuse us from sending you any further communications, except on the distinct understanding that they will not appear in the newspapers. We are, for our part, quite ready to leave the public to judge, from the correspondence already published, whether or not we have treated you with fairness, candour, and propriety.

The important consequences following from this correspondence must be dealt with in a separate chapter. As regards S. Mark's itself, little need be added. The Vicar-designate persisted in his refusal to give the required undertaking, and at last, on December 18th, the Bishop wrote him the following letter, definitely refusing to institute him to the benefice :¹

I hereby signify that I refuse to admit you to the benefice of S. Mark's, Washwood Heath, on the following grounds of doctrine and ritual, namely :

That you refuse to give me an assurance that you will not

¹ *Church Times*, December 24, 1925.

reserve the consecrated bread and wine of the Holy Communion otherwise than in some private place to which public access is impossible ;

And that you express your intention to 'stand firm for Reservation with free access for the faithful,' thereby showing that you desire to make it possible for members of the congregation to pray before or to the consecrated elements.

Sooner than press a suit in the Courts, the patron then withdrew his nomination, and offered the living to another clergyman who gave the Bishop the pledges he required.

Shortly afterwards, Father Bennett was instituted to the living of All Saints', Plymouth.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITICAL DECISION

THE immediate result of the events we have just described was the publication by Dr. Barnes, in the *Diocesan Magazine*, of a letter addressed to the clergy. In this letter he reviewed the situation with regard to S. Mark's and the correspondence which had passed between him and ourselves, and ended with the following admonition, which, we may mention in passing, has never been communicated to any of us individually :

The service of ' Devotions ' is illegal, and will continue to be illegal when the Prayer Book is revised. It is based on erroneous doctrine. As bishop, I have promised to drive away erroneous and strange doctrine ; it is my duty to establish law and order in the diocese. I must therefore ask that illegal services such as Benediction, Exposition, Devotions, Procession of the Host, etc., shall cease ; and that no consecrated bread and wine shall be kept in receptacles placed in those parts of our churches to which the public are admitted.¹

Shortly after the publication of this letter, a declaration of loyalty, signed by one hundred and sixty-six of the clergy of the diocese, was sent to the Bishop. These were its terms :

We, the undersigned clergy of the diocese, in view of your

¹ *Birmingham Diocesan Magazine*, November, 1925.

letter in the November issue of the *Diocesan Magazine*, feel very strongly that the time has come when we should make an open declaration of our loyalty.

We desire to express our whole-hearted sympathy with your effort to secure that peaceable order and discipline in the diocese, which is so necessary for the furtherance of the Church's work, and for the good relations between its members.

We pledge ourselves anew to give that ready obedience to your lawful directions which we, as loyal members of the Church of England, owe to you as our bishop.

Certain of our number, however, in promising obedience, would desire quite candidly to state that they are not in agreement with the reasons of your injunctions as expressed in your lordship's letter.

At the same time, we earnestly commend our purpose to those of our fellow Church people who may be called upon to desist from certain practices in public worship which are not provided for by the Prayer Book and are specifically prohibited by your lordship, even though such a course may involve a real measure of self-denial on their part.

We long for peace and goodwill between the various schools of thought, not only in the Church, but in the community at large, and we are deeply conscious of the solemn responsibility resting upon us as Churchmen, to show an example of obedience to those set in authority over us.

We promise our whole-hearted support of your leadership in meeting the urgent need for Church extension in the newly-formed districts of the diocese.¹

This was followed, a day or two later, by a letter to the Bishop signed by two hundred and forty-one lay-members of the Diocesan Conference, which read as follows :

Understanding that the clergy are sending to your lordship a message of loyalty and support, we as lay-members of the diocesan conference desire to assure you of our support also, in

¹ *Birmingham Post*, November 6, 1925.

your effort to bring order and discipline into the Church ; and we renew the expression of loyalty which we made at the Town Hall meeting shortly after your arrival, and which has not been disturbed by recent events.¹

It was only to be expected that once such a movement had been set on foot, it would receive a considerable measure of support, since the churches in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved were only a small proportion of the whole, and it is easy enough to give an assurance of obedience to injunctions which have no personal application. It was indeed no small consolation to us in the difficult situation thus created that more than one hundred of the clergy, and one hundred and fifty-three lay-members of the Diocesan Conference, felt unable to sign these declarations. Moreover, some at least of those who signed did so with very mixed feelings, as witness the following letter to the *Church Times*, from three of the signatories :

May we say a few words in explanation of our signatures to the declaration of loyalty to the Bishop of Birmingham ? We disagree profoundly with many of the bishop's utterances, and we deplore his attitude towards our fellow Anglo-Catholics. The manifesto was worded very differently from the language we ourselves would have chosen, and we insisted on the inclusion of the saving clauses in paragraph 4 of the declaration. With this addition we signed it, because we hold that a bishop has the right to prescribe the conditions under which the Blessed Sacrament may be reserved. Our signatures attest our readiness to obey ; they do not express our personal agreement

¹ *ibid.*, November 10, 1925.

with the decisions of the bishop, or (still less) with his assigned reasons.¹

At the same time, we have no desire to minimize the effect of these declarations. They strengthened the Bishop's hands, did much to influence public opinion against us, and made it appear that any of us who resisted the Bishop's injunctions would be offending not only against Church Order, but against the highest interests of the diocese. We do not for a moment suggest that the signatories were actuated by any ill-will towards us. As we have seen, a few who had Catholic sympathies signed because of their conviction that the Bishop was in the right on the question of authority. We have reason to know that there were many others who, while they actively disliked the practices now forbidden, would have been quite willing that they should be tolerated. But they honestly believed that the controversy could only end in one way ; and that, if it were made clear that the Bishop had a sufficiently strong measure of support behind him, a dispute which was doing such grievous harm both to the diocese and to the Church at large would be ended by a capitulation, which, so they felt, was sooner or later inevitable. The event has not justified such expectations. The declarations, so far from promoting a settlement of the dispute, only suc-

¹ *Church Times*, November 20, 1925.

ceeded in widening its area, and adding to its intensity.

In the meantime, the Bishop had announced that he did not feel able, in accordance with his consecration promises, to license or give permission to curates to work at churches in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the open church ; and he had already exercised such disciplinary action in three cases. It became clear that the time had come for us to take united action, and that we must stand or fall together. A meeting of the incumbents concerned was held on November 26th, and the whole position was considered in all its bearings. As a result, fifteen of us solemnly pledged ourselves to maintain our established practice, to which the previous Bishop had given his sanction ; that is to say, to continue to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in order to communicate the sick and dying, and others who for good reason were prevented from receiving during the service ; and to continue this Reservation in the open church, so that the devotion of our people should not be hindered. Two incumbents who were unable to be present at the meeting subsequently gave the same pledge.

Important practical consequences were necessarily involved in this decision. We wrote at once to the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance asking whether our grants would be

affected in the event of the refusal of licences to our assistant-clergy. We were told in reply that the invariable custom of the Bishop of Birmingham's Fund did not permit of grants being given without the Bishop's licence or permission to officiate. This at once raised the whole question of our relation to diocesan finance. It was obvious that we could not continue to pay our quotas to the diocese if we were to receive no grants. Quite apart from the manifest injustice of such a demand, we were all poor churches, and the added burden would have meant speedy insolvency for most of us. Moreover, the three churches whose grants were already threatened were in immediate need of assistance, and the problem was bound to become increasingly difficult as further licences were refused. It seemed to us, therefore, that we had no choice but to cease for the time being to pay our quotas to the Diocesan Board, and to appeal to Catholics outside the diocese to help us to make up the considerable sum we should lose by the withdrawal of our grants.

With this end in view, a resolution in identical terms was passed unanimously by the Church Council of each of the fifteen parishes concerned. It was as follows :

That in view of the following considerations :

(1) That in at least three instances, the bishop has refused to license curates or give permission to them to officiate in churches

where the Holy Sacrament is publicly reserved, on the grounds that such public reservation is illegal, and based on erroneous doctrine ;

(2) and that the invariable custom of the Bishop of Birmingham's Fund does not permit of grants being given without the bishop's licence or permission to officiate ;

(3) and, further, that in at least two instances, the bishop has refused to accept Anglo-Catholic candidates for ordination who have been trained at recognized theological colleges, and assisted throughout their course by the Diocesan Ordination Fund ;

we find ourselves compelled to withdraw all support from the Diocesan Board of Finance while this unfair and partisan policy is persisted in.

In order that our financial arrangements should be on a proper and businesslike footing, we then proceeded to form our own Finance Board, which has continued to administer our resources up to the present time. It consists of the Vicar and one lay representative of each of the parishes concerned, together with twelve co-opted members—six assistant priests and six laymen or women. We pay our quotas to it, and with the money thus provided, together with contributions from other sources, it pays the grants we have lost. Through our Finance Board, too, we have throughout contributed as our resources have permitted to the Central Board of Finance, to Church extension in Birmingham, and to other diocesan objects, except the Bishop of Birmingham's Fund and the Diocesan Ordination Fund.

In connection with the formation of the Finance Board, we asked for the support of the President

and Council of the English Church Union, who issued a public appeal on our behalf, with the result that in less than a month more than £3,000 was contributed.

At the same time, Lord Shaftesbury wrote the following letter to *The Times* :¹

In view of the deplorable situation in the Diocese of Birmingham, I am requested by the Council of the English Church Union to communicate to you the following statement :

At a meeting of the Council of the English Church Union, held on Wednesday, November 18, 1925, it was resolved that the support of the Union should be given to those clergy of the Diocese of Birmingham who are contending :

1. That reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is required in order to communicate the sick and dying at any time.
2. That reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is required to give Communion to those who are prevented from being able to receive at the service itself.
3. That the people should not be prohibited from the opportunity of devotion before the Blessed Sacrament so reserved.

This policy has been decided on in view of the following considerations :

1. That the Bishop of Birmingham's directions are avowedly part of a campaign against the doctrine of a real objective Presence in the Holy Eucharist, a doctrine the legality of which has not been challenged for more than a generation.
2. That the present conditions of Reservation in the Diocese of Birmingham were approved by the late diocesan.
3. That pending the decision of the Episcopate as a whole in regard to the mode of Reservation, which will be expressed in the Revised Prayer Book, the faithful of one diocese ought not to be deprived, by the will of a single bishop, of devotional practices which are enjoyed without molestation by the faithful of most English dioceses.

¹ December 29, 1925.

We should like at this point to express at least something of the deep debt of gratitude we owe to the President and Council of the English Church Union. It is not only that by their influential and timely assistance they relieved us of the heavy burden of financial anxiety that weighed upon us at this time. We have consulted them with regard to each difficulty as it arose ; they have never failed to give us their sympathy, encouragement, and support ; and their advice has been invaluable.

So soon as it became known that we had decided to cease paying our quotas, the Diocesan Board of Finance invited us to a conference, an invitation which, after very careful consideration, we declined. Our reasons for so doing are fully explained in the following letter which was addressed by our Chairman to the Secretary of the Diocesan Board:

At a full meeting of clergy and lay representatives of those parishes which have felt compelled to withdraw their support from the Diocesan Board of Finance, your letter was carefully considered. It was unanimously agreed that for the following reasons no useful purpose would be served by accepting the invitation of the Board to a conference :

1. Our action, which is purely defensive, has been rendered inevitable by the attitude adopted by the bishop towards Anglo-Catholics. He has refused to grant licences or permission to officiate to assistant clergy in certain parishes where the Holy Sacrament is publicly reserved. He has, moreover, constantly and publicly attacked the doctrine of the Real Presence ; and these attacks have been repeated by him, since your invitation

was sent to us, in the pulpit of the Cathedral Church, when he stigmatized our doctrine as magic, our devotion as fetish worship, and our practices as superstitious lawlessness. He has also rendered an equitable administration of the Ordination Candidates' Fund impossible, by refusing in at least two instances to accept for ordination Anglo-Catholic candidates, who have been trained at recognized Theological Colleges and assisted throughout their course by the Ordination Candidates' Fund. Both of these candidates, we may mention, have since been ordained by bishops in other dioceses.

2. A large number of members of the Board of Finance, both clerical and lay, have identified themselves with, and have approved of, the bishop's attitude towards Anglo-Catholics, as is shown by the fact that they have signed letters of confidence which have been sent to the bishop and published in the Press. In one of these letters the signatories expressed their 'whole-hearted sympathy' with the bishop's disciplinary methods; and in the other said that their confidence in him had not been disturbed by recent events.

3. In view of these facts, while greatly appreciating your assurance that your invitation to us is a friendly gesture, and while yielding to none in our desire for diocesan harmony and unity, we are regretfully driven to the conclusion that no conference between us will be real or fruitful until such time as the bishop and his supporters are prepared to recognize our rightful position in the Church of England, and to treat us with fairness and proper consideration.

As chairman of the newly-formed Anglo-Catholic Finance Board I have been asked to communicate to you this unanimous decision on behalf of all the parishes concerned. Since the fact of your invitation to us has been made public by your chairman, we feel reluctantly compelled to give an equal publicity to our reply.

Our conviction that a conference would be fruitless has been fully justified by later events. In April last an approach was made to the Anglo-Catholic Finance Board by the Archdeacon of

Birmingham, as representing the Propaganda Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance, expressing a strong desire that the parishes in question should come back again into the diocesan scheme of finance, so as to help to produce a greater unity of diocesan action. This approach was cordially welcomed by the Anglo-Catholic Finance Board, who unanimously passed the following resolution, which was subsequently reaffirmed by the incumbents of the parishes concerned and forwarded to the Archdeacon of Birmingham :

That this meeting of the Anglo-Catholic Congress Finance Board, after carefully considering a communication from the Archdeacon of Birmingham as representing the Propaganda Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance, suggesting that in order to produce a greater unity of diocesan action the parishes represented on the Anglo-Catholic Congress Finance Board should be willing to come back into the Diocesan Scheme, heartily reciprocate the desire for diocesan unity so expressed, and express their willingness to come back into the Diocesan Scheme, provided they have the assurance that the grants from the Bishop of Birmingham's Fund will be resumed on the understanding that evidence is forthcoming that the grantees are giving full time service in their parishes, and without any further requirement.

In the negotiations which took place, it was made quite clear on both sides that the resolution did not represent any weakening of the attitude which the parishes concerned had felt obliged to adopt.

The Diocesan Committee in question thereupon

appointed a deputation to wait upon the Bishop with a view to obtaining his views on the terms of the proposed reunion.

The Archdeacon intimated that the Bishop had refused to give his approval to the proposal, and would send a written communication to that effect, but no further letter has been received.

Our action in ceasing to pay our diocesan quotas and forming our own Finance Board has sometimes been criticized on the ground that it gave to our resistance the character of an organized rebellion. We would emphasize the fact that it was entirely a defensive measure, forced upon us by the exigencies of the situation. The question as to whether we were right or wrong in refusing to obey the Bishop's injunctions will be faced in the next chapter. Our withdrawal from diocesan finance, and the organization of our own Fund, were the inevitable outcome of our decision with regard to this larger issue. We could not continue to pay our quotas to the diocese when deprived of our grants ; and without the pooling of our resources the harsh and unlovely weapon of financial pressure would have been brought powerfully to bear on those among us who were least in a position to withstand it. The argument that refusal to pay the diocesan quota is a form of rebellion will not, we suggest, bear a moment's critical examination. As regards the laity, it rests

on the unconscious assumption that the quota is a legal tax, and not a free-will offering. As regards the clergy, it can only be maintained by giving to the oath of canonical obedience a connotation as novel as it is indefensible.

CHAPTER V

OUGHT WE TO HAVE OBEYED ?

THE primary object of this volume is neither to state a case against Dr. Barnes in the administration of his diocese nor to attempt to justify the action taken by those who disagree with him. It is rather to place before the reader an orderly record of the sequence of events, and that as impartially as may be possible from those who still feel the smart of the wounds they have received, and to leave him to draw his own conclusions. But the question which is asked at the head of this chapter has been one of vital importance to those of us whom the Bishop has designated 'rebels,' and we feel that it ought to be considered in the general context of the book.

As it now stands it is retrospective ; and it is proverbial that it is easy to be wise after the event. When the question first came before us it was in the form 'Can we obey ?' and thus it presented itself as a momentous matter for immediate decision. We found ourselves faced with two alternatives : we must either submit absolutely to the Bishop's demands, or we must refuse to obey

them. There was never any opening for diplomatic *pourparlers*. This point need not be laboured, it is obvious from what has been described in previous chapters. In due course we shall attempt to state the reasons which influenced our decision; at this stage it is enough to say that we determined to oppose the Bishop's instructions to remove the Blessed Sacrament from our churches.

This resolve, we ask our readers to believe, was taken only after careful and prayerful deliberation. We recognized to the full the seriousness of the step we were taking ; we knew quite well that our position would be misunderstood not only by our opponents but also by some of our sympathizers ; and the future consequences of our action were hidden from us. But those of the clergy concerned were unanimous and unwavering in their decision ; it was quite clear to them that their duty to their own conscience, and their obligation to the spiritual needs of their people, required that the sacrifice should be made.

The expected criticism of our action was not long delayed. On February 8, 1926, a letter appeared in the *Church Times* from Lord Hugh Cecil, in which he made the following statements :

I do most earnestly regret that the Bishop of Birmingham should have written an article giving teaching which seems plainly contrary to any possible interpretation of the Book of Common Prayer. I none the less think that while he is bishop of the diocese he ought to receive due obedience. It is quite probable

that fair criticism may be made of the bishop's use of his authority, but there is an end of obedience if it is to be withheld from those who are thought to be injudicious; nor is a charge of heresy against him sufficient excuse for disobedience, unless and until all lawful remedies have been exhausted.

The clergy in the Diocese of Birmingham should begin by appealing against the heresy of their bishop to the Metropolitan, or to the Convocation of the Province, and only if they are refused a remedy have recourse to disobedience. If it be said that while the revision of the Prayer Book is under discussion such appeals would be inconvenient and inappropriate (which I should not deny), the answer is that obedience is a better temporary makeshift than disobedience, and that the practice of reserving the Sacrament is so very recent, and has been so long disused in the Church of England, that the sensible grievance of certain restrictions upon it is almost microscopically small. For these reasons it seems to me that the dissatisfied clergy of the Diocese of Birmingham ought to obey under protest, till the liturgical rules of the Church of England are authoritatively determined, and then in some form or other proceed against the bishop for his erroneous teaching.

I write all this not without sympathizing with the feelings of the clergy in Birmingham, but because it does seem to me that controversies are much exacerbated in the Church of England by a thoroughly English desire to do as we like. The real zeal for humble submission which animated the Tractarians seems now quite disused. The fashion is, as much amongst Anglo-Catholics as Protestants, to try to get our own way by bullying the bishops. I am sure this is neither Catholicism nor Evangelicalism.

We shall attempt to answer the general objections which Lord Hugh Cecil makes against our line of action later in this chapter. One point, however, seems to call for immediate explanation. The writer advises us to appeal to the Metropolitan against Dr. Barnes before refusing to give him

the obedience he demands. This had already been done some months previously. The then Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Davidson) kindly consented to receive a deputation of representative Birmingham Anglo-Catholic clergy at Lambeth Palace, and both writers of this book were members of that deputation. The interview was of a private nature, and therefore Lord Hugh Cecil could not be expected to know that it had taken place ; neither is it possible, for the same reason, for us to state what happened at the conference. We may say, however, that his Grace listened to the statement of our case with careful and sympathetic attention ; and we desire to put on record that we did not make our final decision to refuse to give up Reservation until it was evident that the Archbishop did not find it possible to intervene publicly in the affairs of the Birmingham diocese.

Against Lord Hugh Cecil's criticism of our action we would quote a passage from a letter written by Dr. Gore to *The Times*, in which he states that no High Churchman could be expected to render obedience to the directions of a bishop who was actuated by such motives as was Dr. Barnes. The relevant paragraph reads as follows :

It is the duty of a bishop in a comprehensive Church, such as ours, to be careful to be impartial in his attitude towards all the types of doctrine which can reasonably claim to be included within the positive and dogmatic requirements of the Church of England. To my mind the scandal of the Bishop of Birming-

ham's reiterated attacks upon a certain type of Eucharistic doctrine plainly covered by the Anglican tradition, is that he has set himself to cover with abuse and ridicule, without any signs of consideration or justice, a doctrine which he is officially bound to tolerate. He has thus grievously injured the prospect of peace and mutual understanding within the Church, and, I suppose, within his own diocese rendered any kind of reasonable discipline impossible, *because no high Churchman could be expected to render obedience to any directions given by a bishop whose manifest motive is to destroy a doctrine which the high Church Movement lawfully exists to uphold.*¹

This was actually the position we had faced eighteen months before Dr. Gore wrote his letter. We were then, as we are now, prepared to render due and canonical obedience to our ecclesiastical superior ; we were not unmindful that for the sake of the wider unity and peace of the Church individuals should be prepared to make sacrifices; and if Dr. Barnes had met us in a spirit of sympathetic understanding, and had evidenced that comprehensive attitude which Dr. Gore rightly emphasizes as a characteristic of the English Church, he would not have found us unreasonable or difficult to deal with. Instead of this he refused to negotiate with us as a recognized body within the Church of England ; he stigmatized us in the secular Press as ' law-breakers and rebels ' ; and issued his orders to us, not privately and individually, but through the medium of the *Diocesan Magazine*.

¹ *The Times*, October 30, 1927. The italics are ours.

The most serious matter of all, however, was his reiterated statement that our practices were based upon false and erroneous doctrine ; we believed, he said, in a pagan sacramentalism akin to the mystery religions ; our devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament had its origin in primitive magic, and involved superstition and idolatry ; and as for Reservation—‘ one can no more reserve the Sacrament than one can reserve an exploding shell.’ These repeated and continuous attacks on our Faith were always reported at length in the local Press, they were eagerly read by our fellow townsfolk, and the Catholic laity were both wounded and outraged by them. Such was the condition of affairs, quite apart from all other considerations, that it would have been utterly impossible for us to have made terms with Dr. Barnes, because, had we done so, our laity would have lost all faith in us, and in the teaching we had given them for so many years. Our surrender would have meant a betrayal of our pastoral office which involved the cure of souls committed to us at our institution.

The motive which prompted our action, however, was never one of mere expediency. We honestly believed that in resisting Dr. Barnes we were in no way false to our oaths of canonical obedience. In this connection we would quote at some length from a monograph written by the

Rev. Kenneth Mackenzie, which accurately expresses our point of view, and states in a general manner the particular dilemma with which we were faced :

The real difficulties of the present moment are not connected so much with the duty of obedience to the Church, which all Catholics acknowledge, as with the obedience due to the normal interpreter of the mind of the Church, that is to say, the individual bishop. It is here that the analogy to the army breaks down. If the Church were under *military* discipline, every bishop would have to render immediate and unquestioning obedience to his archbishop, every priest to his bishop, and every layman to his priest. We cannot put the junior officers under discipline, and exempt the generals and the privates. The truth surely is that it is impossible to claim that the different grades in the Church owe an *absolute* obedience to their ecclesiastical superiors : the obedience which they owe, and which the bishops and clergy (but not the archbishops) have taken an oath to give, is *canonical*. No one would dream of supposing that the Archbishops of Canterbury and York exercised a despotic sway over the other bishops of those provinces. Their authority is limited to the right to preside at their meetings, to veto their decisions, and to call on them to obey the laws of the Church. The same is true of Patriarchs and Metropolitans in other parts of the Church. It is only the Pope who claims unfettered and unlimited supremacy.

In the same way the bishop can call on the clergy to obey the canons of the Church ; but he cannot call on them to disobey them. Thus a bishop, in the Church of England, can command a priest to use the Eucharistic vestments, because they are ordered in the only authoritative liturgical book which we possess ; but he cannot order him not to use them. (In the Church of Ireland, the position is reversed.) He can order an incumbent to hear confessions ; but he cannot forbid him to do so. In other words, an individual bishop is not a law-giver except within rather narrow limits, and it should not be supposed that either his clergy or his laity are obliged to do whatever he tells them.

The authority of the bishop over his clergy is no doubt greater than that of the Metropolitan over his suffragans, but it is not absolute. There are two principal ways in which it is held in check. (1) The individual bishop cannot make a canon for his diocese without consulting his clergy in synod, nor even, according to some authorities, without obtaining their consent. (2) In instituting a priest to the cure of souls, the bishop makes to him a grant of authority which is irrevocable. He can cite him before a court and deprive him of his benefice by legal process ; but he cannot simply deprive him at will. He must prove either that he is a false teacher or that he contumaciously refuses to obey the laws of the Church. This irrevocability is expressed in canon law by the statement that a beneficed priest has ' ordinary ' and not merely ' delegated ' jurisdiction.

This jurisdiction is given for a certain purpose—namely to preach the Word of God and minister the sacraments within a certain defined area. He is henceforth personally responsible to God for the preaching of the Catholic Faith and the due ministration of the sacraments. Neither the bishop nor the priest can annul this responsibility. The priest cannot take shelter behind the bishop to excuse either the falsity or inadequacy of his teaching or his neglect to see that the sacraments are properly available. He has a personal pastoral responsibility and cannot evade it.

No doubt under normal circumstances he will only be too eager to follow the lead of his spiritual father. If this be not possible, he will obey his spiritual superior on general grounds of order. But where his pastoral responsibilities are really concerned, there may come a point where it is necessary to say, ' We ought to obey God rather than man.' The great differences of opinion which are tolerated within the Anglican Communion do occasionally produce this rather terrible situation. A priest is instituted to the cure of souls, and finds himself responsible for seeing that no one through his fault shall die without the sacraments. His bishop, to take an extreme case, denies the necessity of sacramental ministrations to the dying, and forbids the reservation of the Eucharist, basing his requirements on the letter of a rubric inserted in the Prayer Book with a different object. The priest has three courses open to him : obedience to his conscience and

the universal custom of the Catholic Church, obedience to the bishop, or resignation, which means handing his flock back into that bishop's pastoral care. What ought an English Christian gentleman to do ?¹

The ' rather terrible situation ' imagined in the last paragraph actually existed, and still exists, in Birmingham. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the fundamental issue between the Bishop and ourselves was whether or not we should be allowed to continue the practice of perpetual Reservation which had been sanctioned by Dr. Russell Wakefield. The question of extra-liturgical Devotions has never been a matter of primary concern with us, it was the larger issue which occupied all our attention. This is made perfectly clear in the English Church Union manifesto which is quoted at length in the previous chapter, and the fact is of the greatest importance because it explains why our resistance was so determined. We were a body of parish priests who had had Reservation in our churches for very many years, and most of us ministered in poor parishes where we had a large number of sick folk, and where bed-side Celebrations were wellnigh impossible. In one parish—S. Patrick's, Bordesley—an accurate record of the number of sick Communion given in each year has been

¹ K. D. Mackenzie, *Obedience to the Church* (Catholic Literature Association).

kept, and the average exceeds one hundred and fifty a year ; emergency cases, where the dying person would have been deprived of the Blessed Sacrament had it not been reserved, have also been frequent. The parish quoted has a comparatively small population, only five thousand souls, and far more impressive figures could be supplied by larger parishes. Dr. Barnes never made any inquiry as to the conditions which prevailed in our parishes ; he simply ordered us to cease reserving the Sacrament in our churches.

A good deal of misunderstanding of our action has arisen from the fact that, in the first instance, the Bishop did not forbid Reservation altogether. He would have been content at that time to tolerate, though he would not sanction, the reservation of the Consecrated Elements in a safe in the vestry, or in some other place inaccessible to the Faithful. Such a surrender as this was obviously impossible to any who believed that the Holy Sacrament should be treated with reverence and respect. Moreover, the reason given for this demand, viz. that if our people said their prayers in the presence of the Reserved Sacrament they would be guilty of idolatry and fetish-worship, made the practice of Reservation in the church a vital issue on doctrinal grounds. We could not have obeyed the Bishop's directions in this matter, in view of the grounds he assigned

for them, without tacitly admitting that he is justified in his contention that there is no rightful place in the Church of England for those who believe in the Real Objective Presence of the Lord Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament.

Since the rejection of the Prayer Book Measure by Parliament, the Bishop has definitely adopted the attitude that Reservation is now, beyond any doubt, illegal, and cannot therefore, under any circumstances, be allowed. The position, therefore, has hardened, and has, if possible, further justified our action of five years ago. The Bishop rules his diocese, not as an official of the Church, but as an officer of the State ; and this, we would contend, robs his directions of any moral value. We cannot, before the bar of conscience, deprive the souls committed to our care of what has been proved, beyond all question, to be a real spiritual need, because of the refusal of the House of Commons to approve a practice which we believe to be sanctioned by the unrepealed Canon Law of the Church of England.

We would further urge, in conclusion, that our stand is morally justified, because Dr. Barnes, in prohibiting Reservation in any church in his diocese, is not acting in accordance with the mind of the English Church, as expressed through her college of bishops and her representative institutions. It would be impossible, and unnecessary,

to detail here the action taken with regard to Reservation by the majority of the bishops since the rejection of the Prayer Book Measure. It is sufficient to say that they have recognized the need for Reservation, and have made provision for it in their dioceses. Must the Church people of Birmingham, then, be alone in being deprived of this proved need ? Must the clergy and laity give unquestioning obedience to a Bishop who has set himself against the general body of the bishops, and has arrogated to himself papal powers ? Must no protest be registered when the same Bishop states that the practice of Reservation is based upon dangerous and erroneous doctrine, and for that reason also it must be discontinued ? Such is the condition of affairs as we write these words ; and, as we look back upon our action of five years ago, when we had first to answer the question, ‘ Can we obey ? ’ our conviction is strengthened that the answer we then gave was the only one possible, and that subsequent events have further justified what we were then most regretfully compelled to do.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT THE BISHOP HAS SAID

WE now approach the most painful part of our task. We explained in the last chapter that one of our principal reasons for resisting the Bishop's injunctions lay in the fact that he gave reasons for them which we believe to be theologically indefensible. We saw clearly enough, what at that time was by no means generally understood, that his veto on Reservation was not merely an attempt to suppress what he regarded as an illegality, but was part of a definite campaign directed against the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist and the whole conception of Sacramental Grace. To establish this contention, it is necessary for us to quote from the Bishop's public statements, and we will do so at some length, in order to avoid, so far as is possible, isolating particular phrases from a context that might explain or modify them.

We have already referred to the sermon preached by Dr. Barnes at his enthronement, in which he spoke of 'a pagan sacramentalism which had entered into Latin Catholicism, and

pretended that they could create the Bread of Salvation by some magic of ritual or formula.’¹ It was not long before this thesis was fully elaborated by the Bishop. On January 21, 1925, he addressed a meeting at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, called under the auspices of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement. We take the relevant passage of his speech from the report in the *Birmingham Post* : ²

In the intellectual decline of the last centuries of the Roman Empire, pagan beliefs entered Christianity. A sacerdotalism grew up entirely foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. The priesthood of the laity was the dominant note of the early Church, and the Liberal Evangelical insists that the Christian minister has no sacerdotal powers which the Christian layman does not possess. The orders of the minister regulate his position as representative of the congregation, but Christ is as truly present when a layman or Free Church minister presides at the Holy Communion as when an archbishop takes the service. We wish no unnecessary breach with ancient custom, but truth is above all. Whatever corrupts truth, injures religion. . . .

Owing to the emotional upset of the Great War, superstitions have assumed a dangerous vitality. The real presence of Christ in the Holy Communion is a doctrine, the expression of a psychological truth, which the English Church, or High Churchmen within it, have always asserted. Christ is present in the whole service of Holy Communion, really and truly present. But that is a doctrine by which, at the Reformation, the English Church replaced the belief that by saying words over a piece of bread the priest could change its substance. To my mind, that belief which the English Church then repudiated is intellectually intolerable. It is a superstition, but it is reviving, and among us there are those who are passionately demanding the practice of Reservation, the very possibility of which was absolutely

¹ See p. 16 above.

² January 22, 1925.

precluded by our Church nearly four centuries ago. The fact is that in an age of new ideas and emotional disturbance, religion is perilously poised between reaction and progress. Forward-looking men are suspected by those who cannot see the strong foundations on which their faith rests. Remember that the higher spiritual understanding of men, that understanding which we must at all costs preserve, is a recent acquisition in all races where it exists, even among ourselves. Such spiritual understanding in an age of religious disquiet is always in danger of being submerged by vague beliefs of hoary antiquity, and when these take on a Christian colour, and are justified by being termed universal—some prefer the word Catholic—then they are especially dangerous; and then can only be destroyed, these hardy remnants of pre-Christian paganism, by rational thought, by the use of scientific method. If they conquer our Church, there are two possibilities: either they will also conquer our civilization, and another Dark Age will set in; or our Church will be repudiated by a civilization of which it is unworthy, and some other Christian Communion will be the beacon from which the light of Christ shines upon the world.

On June 14, 1925, Dr. Barnes preached a sermon at Westminster Abbey, on the subject of 'Catholicism and Christianity.' We take our account of this sermon from a summary in *The Times*:¹

Preaching from the text 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me,' the Bishop said that the present position of the Church of England caused grave anxiety. The Catholic Movement within the Church, which arose during the nineteenth century, had during the last twenty-five years proceeded apace. The value of the Reformation, to which our Church owed its distinctive doctrinal position, was usually belittled and sometimes derided by those who are called Anglo-Catholics. Doctrines which were explicitly repudiated in the Articles, such as the Romish doctrine of Invocation of Saints, were openly taught. Sacramental prac-

¹ June 15, 1925.

tices, such as Reservation, which had not been heard of in their Church for three hundred years, had been introduced in flat defiance of the law. Naturally, the new developments aroused widespread popular irritation, and had alienated many from the Church of their fathers. But more serious was the decline in the number and quality of candidates for the Ministry. The new Catholicism was essentially reactionary: able, religious young men saw that the ideas on which it rested could not be reconciled with any view which to them seemed reasonable of the character of God's government of the world. Evangelicals regarded its distinctive teaching as a degradation of the Gospel of Christ. Young men with such an outlook, naturally hesitated to take Holy Orders. With the grave shortage of clergy the parochial system of the Church of England was breaking down. Differences within the Church were so acute that in the large cities the churches were becoming congregational, and not parochial. As the quality of the clergy declined their outlook was becoming increasingly narrow. The best modern theological scholarship was ignored. At this epoch the Prayer Book fell to be revised. An official committee wisely put forward proposals which, in the main, were non-controversial. But as soon as their proposals reached the representative clergy of the Church, the desire to give a Catholic colour to the Prayer Book showed itself. We stood at the cross-roads. He could not foresee the future, but during the last eight months he had seen enough of the situation within the Church to be gravely apprehensive.

While this retrograde Catholic Movement had been making headway within the Church, archaeological scholarship had been pouring a flood of light on the origins of Catholicism. The essence of all the mystery cults which were the prevailing religions of the Mediterranean in the first centuries of the Christian era was magical sacramentalism. Into a world in which this welter of sacramental faiths was dominant, Christianity came, and it did not entirely resist the contagion of alien ideas. At first it was free from sacerdotalism, but, having once taken root in the Church, sacerdotalism shot up rapidly. The essence of sacerdotalism was the belief that the priest had spiritual powers which other believers did not possess. He was vicar of God and not

merely representative of the congregation. This was the Catholic view. The true Christian idea was that, for due order, certain men should be set apart as ministers to perform the highest acts of congregational worship; yet if a layman commissioned by the congregation should perform such acts, they would deem his conduct irregular, but certainly not spiritually void. It was then impossible, in the light of the New Testament, to unchurch the great Nonconformist communions of to-day.

As Christianity became Catholicized, it also took over from the mystery faiths most of their magical sacramentalism. Religion became contaminated by magic; the spiritual degraded to the mechanical. The Catholicizing of Christianity was the paganizing of it. Fundamentally, the difference between the Christian and the Catholic systems was a difference of belief as to the nature of God. Christ taught that God was the Source of righteousness and love; his actions were reasonable, like those of a good man; he was rightly to be conceived as our Father. The union of the spirit of man with the Divine spirit needed neither priestly mediation nor correct ritual. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,' was the charter of Christian liberty. But the conception of God, as Catholicized through the influence of pagan magical beliefs, was alien to Christian teaching. In it the priest was supposed by virtue of a mechanical succession to be endowed, not merely with authority to act in the name of the congregation, but with spiritual powers. He could then, by correctness of ritual action, and words, endue inanimate matter with a spiritual character. This spiritual character could be transferred to the worshipper prepared by priestly absolution, who then, and only then, found salvation. The sacraments worked by magic—or, in more polite phrase, *ex opere operato*. The system was complete with the completeness of the pagan mysteries. But it was irrational. There was no reason to think that God worked in such a way. The belief that he did so had no warrant in the teaching of Christ.

On August 28, 1925, the Bishop repeated and expounded his views on the Eucharist, in a paper

read at a conference of the Modern Churchmen's Union at Oxford. The first part of this paper was a historical treatment of the subject, in the discussion of which the Bishop said that he accepted the judgement of modern critics that Jesus never said, 'This do in remembrance of Me,' and that He Himself did not institute the celebration of the Lord's Supper as part of the regular worship of His Church. He then went on to point out how the existence of the mystery religions as part of the environment in which early Christianity worked, led to the importation of alien elements into Christian worship ; and he concurred in the view that the significance of the Eucharist was heightened by S. Paul, in an age when non-ethical sacramentalism pervaded religion. He continued as follows :¹

For the belief that inanimate matter can be endowed with spiritual qualities there is no scientific evidence. The contention can be tested by the usual scientific procedure of experiment and observation. A Catholic praying before a wafer which he wrongly believed to have been consecrated, would gain precisely the same spiritual satisfaction as if his belief were true. One sometimes finds a suggestion in Anglo-Catholic apologetics that some good people have a spiritual *flair* which at once enables them to perceive on entering a church whether the consecrated elements are there 'reserved.' We must be tender when superstition is mingled with devotion ; but we may confidently affirm that this fancied *flair* would not survive such an experimental test as could easily be devised. . . . If we abandon, as I contend we must abandon, all magical views of the Eucharist, we must

¹ *Church of England Newspaper*, September 11, 1925.

explain it by such scientific knowledge of human mental processes as we possess. . . . In particular, we shall give no countenance to the view that Christ comes only, or especially, at the moment of consecration of the elements. . . . If we keep a true understanding of the Eucharist, we shall reaffirm the objection of our Church to reservation of the consecrated elements. This objection finds expression in our Articles of Religion; the practice is precluded by one of our rubrics: after the Reformation it was unknown in our Church until recent years. The commonly used phrase 'Reservation of the Sacrament' is a misnomer. As Dr. Carnegie Simpson says, 'The part is not the whole.' You can no more reserve a psychological process than you could reserve an exploding shell.

On December 27, 1925, the Bishop surveyed the events of the year in a sermon in Birmingham Cathedral. In the course of this review, he said :¹

During the past year it has become increasingly evident that the Church of England stands at the cross-roads. May I briefly outline the situation? A strong and persistent attempt is being made to establish among us practices based on mediaeval sacramental doctrine which the Roman Church upholds. Our Church, under the influence of the scientific spirit which was reborn at the Renaissance, decisively altered its sacramental doctrine at the Reformation. It then stated clearly in our articles of belief that no change takes place in the actual substance of the bread and wine in the Holy Communion. Further, it added that such belief 'overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.' Mediaeval thinkers contended that the actual substance was changed, which is another way of saying that matter can be endued with spiritual properties. We have no warrant for belief that God works on these lines. The Divine Spirit does not narrow himself to the limits of material things so as to change their actual substances or content, nor can we gain contact with him otherwise than by faith. If we believe that he is in the bread, as the heathen

¹ *Birmingham Post*, December 28, 1925.

believes his god to be one with the idol in its niche, then we are not far from fetish worship. If such a doctrine becomes in any form re-established in the Church of England, the Church can no longer be the spiritual home of thoughtful people. They can accept the ethical sacramentalism of S. Paul, the belief that God in Christ comes to those who pray for his presence, and are worthy to receive him. But they cannot accept magic; and it is a magical view of the Sacrament which lies behind the demand that the consecrated bread and wine of the Holy Communion shall be so publicly placed in our churches that worshippers may pray to or before these elements. The same view has led to illegal services known as Adoration, Benediction, Procession of the Host, and so forth. Some trouble has arisen in this diocese because I have refused to take action which countenances such practices. They are illegal. There is no reason to think they will be allowed as a result of Prayer Book revision. As bishop, I have promised to banish and drive away erroneous and strange doctrine. All the clergy of the diocese have promised to obey me in all things lawful and honest. In such circumstances the present superstitious lawlessness ought not to exist. The evil in it is twofold. It alienates thoughtful men and women from the Church. It prevents us as a Church from being united in our effort to preach the essentials of the Gospel of Christ and to spread his spirit throughout the community. We need unity. But we cannot get unity save through loyalty to truth.

In May of the following year, Dr. Barnes made another pronouncement of a similar kind, this time in a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge. Again we quote from the summary in the *Birmingham Post* :¹

The English High Churchman, of the traditional type, would maintain that special grace was given to the ministry of those episcopally ordained, and urged that their more regular sacraments were more efficacious. He (Dr. Barnes) could not see

¹ May 17, 1926.

that such a theory could be established by any test they could apply. For the belief that God could endow, not merely men, but inanimate matter with special ministerial grace nothing could be said. It was a superstition, a relic of religious barbarism. All practices based upon it, or upon ingenious variants of it, were swept away by our Church at the Reformation; and the attempt now being made by certain Anglo-Catholic groups to bring them back was a sorry outcome of the cult of mediaevalism which we owed to the Romantic Revival. He could not by blessing oil cause God to give to it therapeutic or spiritual properties. He could not turn water into Holy Water, of value for the sanctification of the faithful. No one in the Eucharist could perform the miracle of transubstantiation. He would go further afield, and affirm that his god did not dwell in the Hindu idol, however impressive were the satisfaction that the belief gave to the worshipper. They could apply scientific tests to inanimate matter, and demonstrate that the spiritual properties supposed to be inherent in it had no existence apart from a knowledge of the rite and ceremonies to which it had been subjected.

It was unfortunately true that a natural tendency to magical sacramentalism still existed in our population. Such superstition could be exploited, but it ought to be expelled by teaching which gave a truer insight into the activity of God.

On December 8, 1926, the Bishop again addressed a meeting of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement at the Birmingham and Midland Institute. Remarking that the deterioration of religion in England and elsewhere had proceeded apace of recent years, he proceeded as follows : ¹

They could at the present time see the revival of delusive hopes and beliefs in the English Church. Their introduction was not due to deliberate wickedness. It was a consequence of

¹ *Birmingham Post*, December 9, 1926.

the fact that at times of religious upset emotion became stronger than reason. Buried ancestral instincts revived under the influence of fear or distress. The history of ancient Israel showed typically how, whenever the people despaired of the power of goodness and truth, they turned to Baal worship, with its licentious ecstasy and human sacrifices. 'Our buried instincts are not, thank God, so degraded,' said the bishop, 'but they are none the less a danger to spiritual religion.'

'In view of the danger, I conceive it my duty, as a religious teacher, to speak openly and firmly. To do so is to incur misrepresentation: but the cause is more important than the welfare of an individual.'

Of two types of religious degeneration in the Church, there was at one extreme the growth of British-Israel theories associated with belief in the immediate coming of the Messiah. After every great calamity in Christendom men had similarly turned for relief from their troubles to the hope of speedy divine intervention. The hope had never been realized. God intends us to make righteousness prevail on earth through our own efforts and struggles. Were Christ to come, his judgement would be moral. It would make no difference whether we were, or were not, descendants of the lost Ten Tribes. The belief that we can claim such descent is ludicrous.

At the other extreme there was a morbid over-growth of sacramentalism, which would result in veneered paganism. When superstition entered in, and with it the belief that in the Holy Communion a consecrated wafer had spiritual properties, then we entered a region of pagan custom and fancy. As against such fancies, they must assert that Christ's judgement after death would be a moral judgement. No sacramental mechanism could alter it.

'We do not need to be fortified against the love of God, and no rites of the Church can fortify us against his justice,' said Dr. Barnes. 'A wafer by itself has no more value than a penny placed in the hand of a dying man to pay his fare to the grim ferryman who shall take him safely across the Styx.'

'The Sacraments are rightly used when, and only when, they inspire men to live good lives. When they become associated with magical or mechanical ideas, their influence becomes

disastrous. Then they sunder religion from morality. Such consequences are familiar to all who have studied history. The Reformation was a protest, in the name of truth, against the moral abuses which were encouraged by the false pagan beliefs entrenched in Catholicism.'

On June 23, 1927, a meeting of the Birmingham Diocesan Conference took place, when the chief business on the agenda was a discussion of a motion to give general approval to the proposals for Prayer Book Revision, shortly to be presented by the House of Bishops to the Church Assembly. The discussion was introduced by the Bishop, who, at the outset of his address, stated frankly that he could not recommend the Revised Book for acceptance by Church people. He went on to say :¹

I will briefly outline my main objections. I regret the alternative form of consecration in the Eucharist, which contains a petition that the Holy Spirit may bless and sanctify the bread and wine. It thus gives colour to a belief that by words and ritual acts we can procure a change in these elements. The idea that spiritual properties can be given to material objects lies behind the doctrine of transubstantiation, which our Church has strongly condemned as erroneous. It is a primitive religious fancy, far older than Christianity, which can be tested by modern scientific method, and fails to pass the test. No man can say, when a piece of bread is presented to him, whether it has been consecrated or not ; and spiritual properties which no man can discover are, for the modern world of educated men, non-existent. The English Church has until now taught that the spiritual grace of Holy Communion is given solely to those who take part in the service of worship. So Cranmer gave us our present prayer of consecration. He deliberately made changes

¹ *Birmingham Post*, June 24, 1927.

from older forms, and his doctrinal position is made clear by his statement: 'The very body of the tree, or, rather, the roots of the weeds, is the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation, of the real presence of Christ's flesh and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar (as they call it).' More than a century after the Reformation, Cosin, a great High Church bishop, could write: 'Christ in the consecrated bread ought not—cannot be kept and preserved to be carried about, because he is present only to the communicants.'

In modern language, a Sacrament is a psychological process, and I repeat what I have said before, you can no more reserve a psychological process than you can reserve an exploding shell. While, therefore, I can approve the taking of the consecrated bread and wine to those sick who have been in heart and mind present at the Communion Service in church, I think that the permission for perpetual reservation which it is now proposed to allow will encourage the growth of error in belief.

'I also view,' the bishop continued, 'with grave misgiving, the misuse of prayers for the dead which the revised Prayer Book makes possible. Masses for the dead, combined with non-scriptural teaching with regard to purgatory, proved lucrative to the mediaeval Church. They were thrown aside at the Reformation because it was felt that for the Church to gain money by pretending to influence the fate of the soul after death was morally wrong. I do not wish to permit even the possibility of the revival of such evil. I cannot therefore commend the revised book, in spite of its many-sided excellence, because—

- (1) It gives us two services of Holy Communion;
- (2) It allows perpetual reservation;
- (3) It does not sufficiently guard against the misuse of prayers for the dead.'

The motion for approval was carried by a majority of 89—236 voting for, and 147 against, the Bishop voting in the minority.

On October 6, 1927, Dr. Barnes gave an address at one of the weekly Dinner-hour Services

at Birmingham Parish Church. The Lord Mayor was present to commend the services for providing a platform where all denominations could join in the fuller promotion of Christian fellowship. The Bishop said that he proposed to be controversial in intending to discuss sacramental truth and falsehood. He made no apology for his action, because the English Church would break in pieces unless unity as to sacramental doctrine could be reached ; moreover, unless such unity was based on truth, the Church would end by purveying non-moral, semi-magical beliefs which were a travesty of Christianity. The Bishop continued :¹

It is fatally easy to pass from the idea that sacraments serve to reveal God to a belief that through them we can mechanically bring God to man, or cause him to locate himself in some object or place. Such a belief belongs to the realm of primitive magic. The priest-magician from time immemorial has been supposed to possess the skill to persuade his god to show his presence or his power in some unusual fashion. Pretensions to such magical skill are, of course, baseless. Yet the power of appeal of primitive religious fancies is strong within us, and there are always men ready to devise dexterous formulae, to justify superstitions of which we ought to be ashamed.

Take idolatry. The belief that a bronze idol should be worshipped is to us contemptible, but to many an educated Hindu such worship makes an irresistible appeal. Moreover, he has his argument ready. The idol, he avers, is nothing until it has been blessed by the priest. Then the god deigns to dwell within it ; he gives to the image the honour of his real presence. If you ask for a proof of this assertion, an educated Hindu points

¹ *Birmingham Post*, October 7, 1927.

to the ecstatic enthusiasm aroused among worshippers of the wretched idol; such psychological reality, he contends, is sufficient proof.

There are among ourselves to-day men and women whose sacramental beliefs are not far from those of the cultured Hindu idolater. They pretend that a priest, using the right words and acts, can change a piece of bread so that within it there is the real presence of Christ. The idea can be disproved by experiment. If there were a *physical* change in the bread chemical analysis would enable us to detect it. All are agreed that this type of change does not take place. Yet if there be a *spiritual* change, it must surely be possible for man to recognize it by his spiritual perception. Now I assert—and who will gainsay me?—that there is no man living who, if a piece of bread were presented to him, could say whether or not it had been consecrated. Personally, I find it hard to attach any meaning to a spiritual change in dead matter, but if it exists there must surely be some living person who can perceive its existence. If there be no such person, belief in such a change is an idle superstition.

Reiterating to make his point clear, the Bishop urged that if a physical change existed, it would be physically perceived. If a spiritual change existed, it could be spiritually perceived. The word of a man who affirmed the existence of a physical change which no physicist could detect, would not be accepted. Similarly, if a man affirmed the existence of a spiritual change, which no man could recognize by any form of spiritual perception, his statement would be deemed false. 'I am quite prepared to believe in transubstantiation,' he added, 'when I can find a person who will come to the chapel of my house, and tell me correctly whether a piece of bread

which I present to him has undergone the change for which believers in transubstantiation contend.'

On February 12, 1928, the Bishop, preaching at Moseley Parish Church, asked his hearers to pass in thought beyond current controversies to the great fundamentals of Christian belief :¹

With regard to such controversies, he would only say four things. First, the belief that he or any one else could cause a spiritual presence to inhere in, or attach itself to, any material object was a superstition. Secondly, such a belief was pagan, a part of primitive religion. It was a common ingredient in lower forms of religious culture ; it was not Christian. Thirdly, the practice of Reservation encouraged the belief that the priest had, in consecration, given spiritual properties to the bread and wine of Holy Communion : the practice, if allowed, would thus facilitate the teaching of error. Lastly, if such superstitious errors were covertly permitted within the Church, it would, before very long, cease to be either established or endowed as the Church of the English Nation.

On June 9, 1929, the Bishop again preached at Westminster Abbey, and dealt with the religious situation as it appeared to him at that time. He said that the elaborate dogmatic systems of the past had broken down, and were being replaced by a movement towards simplicity and even austerity in religious belief, which was largely due to the influence of men of science. He continued :²

Though it may thus have withdrawn men from public worship, the increasing authority of science since the war has been

¹ *Birmingham Post*, February 13, 1928.

² *ibid.*, June 10, 1929.

of great utility. During the war violent emotional disturbance brought into existence strange beliefs. Primitive religious fancies awoke to new life. In our own Church there was a deplorable outburst of what we usually term mediaeval beliefs, though such really belong to the dim pre-Christian past of the Mediterranean races. Queer types of credulity also flourished under the name of theosophy. Descendants of the Witch of Endor found numerous clients. We can now be thankful that the mental atmosphere created by passion and fear has largely passed away. While it lasted it was troublesome. Bishops found it hard to restrain their clergy from superstitious irregularities in worship. Even in their Prayer Book proposals, the bishops made what are now generally seen to have been, in effect, concessions to religious barbarism. These proposals made it possible to teach that a priest can convey spiritual properties to inanimate matter. The idea was discredited at the Reformation, but it tends to revive in every period of religious reaction. We need the controlling influence of science with its appeal to experiment and reason, to prevent such recrudescence of ancient superstition, whether it arises within or without organized churches.

Meanwhile, it is certain that the vast majority of living Churchmen who have felt the influence of scientific method find miracle no aid to faith. . . . Many of the younger clergy who accept the name of Modernist, are now taking the same standpoint. They are not prepared to deny, but they regard themselves under no obligation to defend the miraculous records of the New Testament. Such controversy, they feel, is best ignored in order that the main work of religious revival may be done. They recognize what no man can deny, that the scientific attitude towards miracle aids the destructive criticism now being applied to the Gospels. They see that such criticism is finding expression in popular literature, and that it is leading secular historians of repute to write most guardedly of the origins of the Christian faith. Naturally, our Modernist clergy do not welcome such tendencies, but they are resolved to accept without fear the guidance of the Spirit of truth. . . . Unfortunately, the Church is widely thought still to demand beliefs incompatible with the outlook created by scientific progress. Though able boys of every social class can now reach the Universities, very

few indeed take Holy Orders. Often they have social enthusiasms; within them, normally, is the sober, religious spirit of our race; but enthusiasm and religious aspiration do not lead to the Christian Ministry. I would that some change might appear. We are often told that there is no dearth of candidates for Holy Orders, but, unfortunately, many of those who now come forward are inadequate alike in mental capacity and in *morale*. Some wish social advancement; they should be rejected. Others have the lamentable confidence which the seminary produces. Too many men ordained during and since the war cloak ignorance and inefficiency beneath an extravagant sacerdotalism. Such men are a weakness alike to the Church, and to the cause of Christian progress. While, then, I find in the present religious situation much cause for satisfaction, I would urge that we cannot be content until some of the best of our young men enter the Ministry of our Church. To remove misunderstanding, we need to explain that while the old standards of belief have crumbled, no new orthodoxy has been officially set forth. A young man enthusiastic for all the new knowledge of our age, can to-day, without dissimulation or hypocrisy, become an Anglican clergyman.

On Michaelmas Day, 1929, being the fifth anniversary of his consecration, the Bishop preached at Birmingham Cathedral. In the course of his sermon he said :¹

Many who realized how serious was the emotional disturbance produced by the Great War expected that religious extravagance and religious reaction and religious exhaustion would show themselves at its close. We are to-day half-submerged in the spiritual backwash of the war. Fear has bred fanaticism. Intellectual perplexity has been joined to spiritual decay. So old credulities have revived. Beliefs rejected at the Reformation four centuries ago are promulgated afresh. They are even more incredible now than then; but they are commended as 'strangely neglected elements in our Catholic heritage.' Against

¹ *Birmingham Post*, September 30, 1929.

all these rightly rejected beliefs, no less than against religious indifference, it is the duty of one in such a position as my own to protest. . . . The Catholic believes in a dualism of natural and supernatural. He accepts transubstantiation with a doctrine of miraculous change of substance. For those of us who see the Reformation teaching in the light of modern knowledge, such mechanical sacramentalism remains unbelievable. Mechanism and magic are natural allies; opposed to them is the free gift of the Spirit, the direct outpouring of divine grace in the human soul. There is no warrant in the teaching of Jesus for the belief that a Christian priest has special power, or that there is some supernatural realm opposed to the natural, where we have to look for God's manifestation of himself. To find God in life's experience we do not need miracles. As against all limitations of God's sovereignty, and equally against any suggestion of priestly authority, the Modernist sets the teaching of Christ. . . . For the simple reason that they are still untrue we will not accept the dogmas of Catholicism, repudiated as untrue at the Reformation. . . . Put behind you the beliefs of the religious twilight, which still persist in Latin Catholicism; they are not Christian, and they have no future.

It will be observed that the foregoing extracts begin with Dr. Barnes' sermon at his enthronement, and end with a discourse delivered by him on the fifth anniversary of his consecration. They are not, of course, a complete record of his references to the subject, but we trust we have provided sufficient examples to make it abundantly clear that his attack upon the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist has been continuous and persistent during the whole five years of his episcopate. We desire to emphasize this fact, because its bearing on the whole controversy is of great importance. We were constantly hoping

against hope that some *modus vivendi* might be devised, and there were happy moments when it seemed as if the clouds were breaking. Then, invariably would come another episcopal pronouncement which shocked our deepest religious feelings and dashed all our hopes to the ground. Something of the effect of these constantly recurring attacks upon ourselves and our congregations may be imagined without difficulty by the reader, but it is only those who had to face them over and over again who can fully realize their effect in making any attempt at reconciliation utterly impossible.

CHAPTER VII

PROTESTS

THE Bishop's attacks on the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, and the sacramental system of the Church, have not been allowed to pass without protest. During the early months of 1925, many letters appeared in the *Church Times*, expressing the growing concern felt by Anglo-Catholics, and there was a good deal of correspondence in the secular press, notably in the *Morning Post* and the *Spectator*, much of it unfavourable to Dr. Barnes.

After the Bishop's sermon at Westminster Abbey on 'Catholicism and Christianity' on June 14, 1925,¹ the English Church Union took action in the matter, and Lord Shaftesbury addressed the following letter to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Davidson : ²

I am writing to your Grace, in my capacity as President of the English Church Union, on a subject which has recently been the occasion of the gravest distress and disquietude, both amongst clergy and laity—namely, a sermon preached by the Bishop of Birmingham in Westminster Abbey, on Sunday, June 14th, and printed in full by the *Church of England Newspaper*, under

¹ See p. 68.

² *The Times*, August 13, 1925.

the title 'Catholicism and Christianity,' for June 19th—a copy of which I enclose.

The sermon has been carefully considered by the Theological and Liturgical Committee of the Union, and I subjoin a report with regard to it which has been drawn up in pursuance of a resolution of this Committee.

The first paragraph of the sermon consists of a violent attack upon 'those called Anglo-Catholics,' which, as it consists of arbitrary assertion, unsupported by evidence, does not appear to merit or be capable of a reasoned criticism.

It introduces, however, a contention which is developed at some length, and for which the authority of 'archaeological scholarship' and of 'practically all independent scholars,' is claimed. This is the well-known 'Mystery-religion' hypothesis of the origins of Catholicism, and specially of Catholic sacramental beliefs, associated with the names of Reitzenstein, Ginkel, and Dieterich amongst German scholars, and Kirsopp Lake in England.

In its original form, as put forward by the scholars just mentioned, the theory that the belief in objective grace imparted through sacramental rites entered Christianity as an infiltration from the Pagan mystery cults—though, of course, it would be deadly to historic Christianity if it could be sustained—possesses a certain plausibility, based upon the (comparatively few) instances of what appears to be sacramental rites connected with the 'Mysteries.' But the bishop's presentation of it is crude in the extreme, suggesting rather a young student's hasty assimilation of some text-book than the mature scholar's investigation of original sources, and goes far beyond what the evidence warrants.

'The essence of them *all* [*italics ours*] was magical sacramentalism'; such a sentence as this—in view of the fact that there is no trace of sacramental ideas in connection with the mysteries of Eleusis or those of the Kabeiroi in Samothrace and that the hypothesis of sacramentalism in Attis-worship rests only upon a single formula of highly doubtful significance, preserved by two Christian writers—produces in us the impression that his knowledge of the subject is superficial, and that he is using the 'mystery' theory merely as a convenient stick for beating Anglo-

Catholicism. One or two phrases suggest that his exposition is based upon Kirsopp Lake's *Earlier Epistles of S. Paul*.

It is not impertinent in this connection to refer to the fact that Dr. Barnes' intellectual reputation has been won exclusively within the realm of mathematics, and that the qualities of a humanist and historian of ideas cannot be acquired in a day. He has fallen into the error, frequent among those who are beginning the study of historical theology for the first time, of taking the more obvious parallels to Christian practice, found in one or two 'mystery' religions, and assuming that they were invariable elements in a kind of highest common factor or general essence of all 'mystery' cults. We venture to doubt whether he would have done this if he had been acquainted with the crushing refutation of this very fallacy contained in A. Schweitzer's *Geschichte de paulinisch. Forschung*. E. tr. *Paul and his interpreters* (1912), p. 192 ff.

His overdrawn caricature of the available evidence contains nothing which can shake the conviction of Christian scholars that, where the parallels between Christianity and ethnic religions cannot be explained by deliberate imitation of the former by the latter, as apparently in the case of the 'Mithraic Eucharistic' they rest upon the fact that human nature is the same everywhere; that the longing for purity and strength is universal in the highest types of religious soul; and that there is no reason for doubting—and ample evidence for believing—that the economy of the Incarnation was divinely designed to satisfy these two needs in much the same way as that in which unredeemed man had endeavoured to satisfy them for himself—namely, by a sacred lustration and a sacred meal. Given the evidence of the New Testament, and the general continuity of God's working in history, which utilizes human ideas and practices in order to spiritualize and refine them, the parallelism between Baptism and the Eucharist on the one hand, and certain pagan usages on the other, is a confirmation rather than a disparagement of the Church's belief respecting her sacramental system.

It may be noted further that Dr. Barnes has not merely given an inaccurate and distorted picture of the data upon which the 'Mystery-religion' hypothesis is based by its advocates: he has

mutilated the theory itself. According to him, the 'atmosphere of the New Testament' is free from sacramentalism, but ideas of this kind are already present in the writings of S. Ignatius. The point of time, therefore, at which the supposed infiltration began must presumably lie between the writings of the Fourth Gospel and that of S. Ignatius' letters—in other words, it may be roughly fixed at *c.* A.D. 100. Now this is a conclusion which would be laughed to scorn by those 'independent' scholars to whom he appeals. It is the whole foundation of the 'Mystery-religion' case that S. Paul was the first Christian sacramentalist; Reitzenstein, Ginkel, Dieterich with one mouth affirm that the Apostle of the Gentiles paganized Christianity in order to commend it to the heathen, and that he wrote the passages 1 Corinthians x. 16–21, xi. 26–30 in precisely the sense which Catholics have always attributed to them (though, of course, these scholars think that his opinions about sacraments were objectively wrong).

It is safe to say that Dr. Barnes' theory of a pure and primitive New Testament epoch, which suddenly came to an end when the Fourth Gospel had been written, and was immediately succeeded by an epoch of 'paganizing,' is one which is held by no serious theologian, either in Germany or elsewhere. If he appeals to Dieterich, to Dieterich he must go: if he throws over the Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments, he must throw over S. Paul and S. John as well.

The argumentative part of the sermon may thus be described as an imperfect *rechauffé* of a highly arbitrary speculation based upon misstatement of the *data*, and leaving out the crucial point, namely the alleged responsibility of S. Paul for the sacramental interpretation of Christianity. Quite apart from the offensiveness which these remarks naturally have for Catholic Churchmen, it appears regrettable that any diocesan bishop should be responsible for so unscholarly an utterance. The rest of the discourse consists of vague denunciations of Catholicism, in which the terms 'magical' and 'mechanical' recur with monotonous reiteration, and without the slightest attempt to define their meaning. Attention should be called to two peculiarly monstrous allegations: (1) that 'Catholicism' and 'Christianity' are different and mutually opposed systems—an amazing statement to come from a preacher who presumably from time to time

declares his belief in one Catholic and Apostolic Church ; and (2) that Catholics worship a God who is not reasonable and loving—an affirmation of which the most charitable explanation is that it is based upon a complete lack of acquaintance with Catholic theology and devotional literature.

So far as the intellectual aspect of the question is concerned, this Report, which has been drawn up by men thoroughly qualified to handle the subject, speaks for itself. I may, however, add to it some considerations of a more practical character, such as come home with especial force to the laity of the Church. These are :

1. That to do its work of saving souls efficiently the Church needs above all things tranquillity ; and that the incessant and bitter attacks of Dr. Barnes upon the Catholic faith produce an atmosphere of exasperation which is deeply prejudicial to the Church's spiritual life.

2. That the utterance, by a bishop of the Church, of sentiments directly attacking the traditional faith of the Church, wounds the conscience and undermines the faith of thousands of poor and simple souls for whom Christ died.

3. That the denunciations of Catholicism by an English diocesan bishop directly stultify all attempts at reunion, and must neutralize the efforts made by your Grace to find a means of *rapprochement* with the Holy Orthodox Church of the East, whose representatives joined in worship with us only the other day ; and that Dr. Barnes' sermon has already been exploited by the Roman Catholic organ, the *Tablet* (July 4th) in order to undo the good work begun at Westminster Abbey on S. Peter's Day last.

In view of these grave considerations, I beg to express to your Grace the hope that you will take such steps as to your wisdom may seem meet to provide against a recurrence of this most distressing and scandalous event.

In reply, the Archbishop wrote :¹

I thank you for your letter of July 25th, written in your capacity of President of the English Church Union.

¹ *The Times*, August 13, 1925.

I realize the importance of the matter upon which you write, and the careful and thoughtful character of the communication which you have made to me. You will not, I think, expect me to discuss in a letter the controversial aspect of the question. You will realize that I do not regard the matter lightly.

The Bishop's sermon at Birmingham Parish Church on 'Sacramental Truth and Falsehood' ¹ aroused greater and more general indignation than any of his previous utterances. The Bishop of London, in the course of an address at the consecration of the Church of S. Alphege, Hendon, spoke of the great pain to thousands of Church people which had been given by the sermon, and Bishop Talbot addressed the following letter to *The Times* : ²

On Friday last the Bishop of Birmingham, preaching at a 'dinner-hour Service' in the Parish Church, attended 'officially' by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, and therefore obviously before a gathering of a very general character, took for his subject the most sacred rite and doctrine of his Church, justifying this unusual course by the need of 'unity as to sacramental doctrine.' Those who read the bishop's utterance will wonder, I think, whether there is a single word calculated to promote that object.

It is with the utmost reluctance that I write against a brother bishop, in a secular paper, on such a subject. No ordinary cause would induce me to do it. But the case seems to me to pass the ordinary bounds. Possibly my age and detachment may be my justification for making (by your permission) the emphatic protest for which the incident seems to me to call by the pain which the bishop's treatment of the subject will give, and the mischief which it may cause.

Anxious, as it would appear, to oppose the modern practice

¹ Quoted on p. 78.

² October 10, 1927.

of Devotions before the Reserved Sacrament (not allowed by the Revised Prayer Book), and to expose the danger involved in them—perfectly legitimate objects in due time, place, and manner, and with which I should with many Catholics have something in common—the bishop adopted the method of denouncing any belief that the elements, while remaining, in the words of the Church Catechism, ‘Bread and Wine which the Lord hath commanded to be received,’ are also in any sense different from what they were before consecration; or that they are different in that they are now that which the Lord Himself declared when breaking the Bread and taking the Cup—‘This is My Body,’ and ‘This is My Blood.’

This is no attack upon a small ‘advanced’ group—it is a denunciation of the devout belief of the whole body of those who own the name of Catholics (or High Churchmen) and of the main body of Catholic theology from the first ages to which such Churchmen appeal. This, however respectfully, carefully, and considerately it might have been done, would have been a strange proceeding on the part of a bishop set to govern and lead Churchmen of various complexions in his flock. It is difficult to speak with moderation of it, done as it was. It may be sufficient to ask what would have been the effect of a like denunciation by a High Church bishop of the beliefs of perhaps half his flock, described as Evangelicals? I think the bishop will find the manner and matter of the attack will be resented deeply from one end of the Church to the other by those whom he has so treated. But I go farther; I shall be surprised indeed if much of what he has said and the way of saying it were not resented almost equally by large numbers of Evangelicals, communicants of the Church’s Sacraments and bred on the Church Catechism. I believe that the Wesleys would have shuddered at the preacher’s rash negations on a subject whose mystery they treated with the most reverent awe.

I wish that it was not necessary to say more, but, as the heading of your report indicates, this is not all that gives to the bishop’s utterances almost the character of an outrage. The heading is ‘Sacramentalism and Idolatry.’ There is much in the long paragraphs which develop a parallel between the Christian priest and the Hindu idolater, which can, to speak frankly, only be

called insulting, and which show that the bishop is not as much at home in the things of Christian thought and learning as he is in those of science.

It is a true relief to pass from all this—with its wearisome iteration of the bishop's misleading catchword, 'magical'—to a paragraph in which, looking back on war experience, he tells us that he would be the last to doubt 'the real presence' of the Lord with men in the service of Holy Communion, taken as a whole. But will he, can he, deny that the consecrated elements, though they be 'cold and inert matter,' are the glowing centre of that service because they are—What they are?

The bishop has told us, what no Christian would deny, that if there is a spiritual change the evidence of it is in spiritual effect. Is there no evidence of such effect in the experience of unnumbered communicants?

A protest of a much more striking and dramatic character was to follow. On October 16, 1927, Dr. Barnes preached at S. Paul's Cathedral. Before the Bishop began his sermon, Canon G. R. Bullock-Webster, Rector of S. Michael's, Paternoster Royal, and Honorary Canon of Ely, proceeded to the entrance of the choir, wearing cassock, surplice, and stole, and accompanied by his Churchwardens, and read the following protest :¹

In the Name of God. Amen.

I, George Russell Bullock-Webster, Clerk in Holy Orders, Master of Arts, Rector of S. Michael's, Paternoster Royal, in the City and Diocese of London, and Honorary Canon of the Cathedral Church of Ely,

Here and now, in the presence of this congregation, in my own name and in the name of a large body of the clergy and faithful laity of this diocese,

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, October 17, 1927.

Do Solemnly Denounce Ernest William Barnes, Doctor of Science, Bishop of Birmingham, for that by the false and heretical teaching in his frequent public utterances, he has denied and poured contempt upon the doctrines and sacraments of the Holy Catholic Church.

And because thereof,

We Do Most Fervently Protest against the invitation given to the said Bishop of Birmingham to preach from the pulpit of the Mother Church of this Diocese ;

And forasmuch as the presence of the said Bishop in any church is an indignity to Almighty God, and a scandal and offence to the Faithful,

We do now call upon our Right Reverend Father in God, Arthur Foley, Lord Bishop of this Diocese, to inhibit the said Bishop from preaching or ministering in any church within his jurisdiction ;

And further, we call upon the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Canterbury to try the said Bishop in respect of these alleged heretical and profane utterances, and, if he be found guilty, forthwith to depose him and cast him out of the Church of God until such time as he do repent himself and recant his grievous errors,

And may God, in his infinite mercy, grant him a speedy repentance.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

And now, brethren, lest our ears should be defiled with fresh profanities, I invite all faithful believers here present to join me in leaving this church before the sermon is delivered and to continue our worship elsewhere.

Having made his protest, Canon Bullock-Webster left the Cathedral, followed by a considerable number of the congregation.

Birmingham Anglo-Catholics had no part in organizing this protest, and did not even know that it was to take place. We therefore do not

feel it necessary to express an opinion as to whether its time and place were well chosen. At the same time, there can be no doubt that it had a remarkable effect in focussing public attention on the indignation which the Bishop had aroused among a large section of Church people, by the violence of his attacks on Catholic doctrine and practice.

Moreover, by inducing Dr. Barnes to address an open letter to the Primate, it succeeded in evoking from Dr. Davidson a reply which, to use the words of the *Daily Telegraph*,¹ left 'no room for doubt in the mind of the reader that Dr. Barnes has called down upon himself a measure of public reproof that, as between Metropolitan and Suffragan, is without modern parallel in the Church of England.'

Dr. Barnes' open letter was as follows : ²

Certain reflections upon an interruption to the service in S. Paul's Cathedral, when I was preaching there last Sunday, may well take the form of an open letter to yourself, as the incident has a significance which your Grace will not minimize.

A dozen years ago I found myself Master of the Temple, and as such, minister to that congregation which, with its legal nucleus, is probably the most intellectual in England.

Soon I discovered that while ancient pieties and the stress of war brought men and women to worship in the Temple Church, there were relatively few among them for whom Christian dogmas had any vitality. Traditional formulae had withered in the mental environment created by modern knowledge, and had been replaced by a wistful agnosticism.

¹ October 24, 1927. ² *Morning Post*, October 20, 1927.

I thereupon began to preach sermons in which I set forth clearly my own beliefs and doubts. I found immediate response and shrewd criticism.

I was thereby encouraged to read widely. I learned the value of plain speech.

If honest conviction is expressed in simple language and maintained by reasoned argument, the strength of its appeal is great. I still try thus to study and to teach. I neither have, nor seek to have, skill in controversy.

So while I argue forcibly against untrue doctrines, I never criticize individuals who hold them. Most of my teaching is positive, and unreported. One cause of weakness of the Church has arisen from the apparent determination of religious teachers to ignore scientific discovery.

Though all competent biologists accept man's evolution from an ape-like stock, the theological consequences of such beliefs are still seldom stated. I set myself years ago to expound these consequences, and to show why they did not seem to me to upset the main Christian position.

On this topic I have preached, or spoken, scores of times. A sermon which I preached when the British Association met at Cardiff in 1920, travelled round the world, and brought me over a thousand letters.

I have always admitted that neither evolution nor Copernican astronomy were accepted at the Reformation when our Prayer Book and Articles received substantially their present form, but the whole theological scheme reared by Augustine on 'The Fall,' can be rejected without injury to the main fabric of Christian belief.

The second main reason for the present alienation of educated men and women from the Church of England is the growth of erroneous sacramental doctrines. During and since the war, the degeneration of sacramental belief has proceeded apace, until to-day late mediaeval theories rejected in the bluntest language at the Reformation are openly taught in Anglican churches.

Hitherto, those who hold such theories have merely asked for tolerance within our communion, but at S. Paul's last Sunday I was denounced for condemning exactly those sacramental errors which our Church repudiates.

A new era has apparently opened when a bishop of the Church of England who upholds its traditional sacramental doctrine is for that reason to be exposed to public attack by those who ignore what is seemly in public worship.

The immediate cause of the outburst appears to be a statement which I now reaffirm : that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is untrue. As every student of comparative religion knows, it has affinities with the magico-religious beliefs of a lower cultural level than that of our present civilization.

I have not hesitated to describe the belief as a superstition, inasmuch as one of our present Articles says that it ' overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.'

I have pointed out the close parallel between the arguments by which ineffective attempts are made to defend alike transubstantiation and idolatry, and I need not remind your Grace that the final rubric of our present Communion Service uses the word ' idolatry.'

We have no right to assume the existence of spiritual properties in an inanimate object unless they can be spiritually discerned : yet there is no man living who possesses the spiritual discernment by which to discriminate between consecrated and unconsecrated bread.

For the last twenty years I have constantly urged in my teaching that our Church formally denies that any change occurs in the bread and wine at consecration.

According to mediaeval theory matter possesses ' accidents ' and ' substance.' The ' accidents ' are physical properties which we can perceive by the senses, and no one has ever suggested that these are changed at consecration. If any change at all takes place it must then be in the ' substance,' but such change of the ' substance ' the Church of England declares to be ' repugnant to the plain words of Scripture.'

I grieve at the suggestion that we, who value traditional Anglican doctrine, thereby depreciate the sacraments.

In reply I spoke as follows in the Birmingham address which called forth the recent protest : ' We understand sacramental grace in its fullness and power, not by foolishly speaking of bread as if it were God himself, but when the heavens open for us

and for a moment, we see the whole of creation, as the expression of God's purpose, and he himself in wisdom, might, and love, the goal to whom our striving leads and the end where man's restless spirit has peace.'

In this letter I have endeavoured to set before your Grace, as clearly and decisively as I can, the teaching against which objection has been taken. It is not false and heretical. No protest must hinder me as a bishop, and, indeed, as a Christian, from upholding religious truth. No man shall drive me to Tennessee or to Rome.

It is vital to the welfare of English religion that the officers of the national Church should fear neither to welcome new knowledge nor to maintain all that is sound in ancient doctrine.

The standard of education is slowly rising. I invite your Grace to consider what steps can be taken to help those of us who are giving of our best to fit the Church to be in the future the spiritual guide of an educated nation.

This letter, of course, calls for no public reply.

The Archbishop replied in the following terms :¹

I have read with great care your open letter to myself published two days ago.

You will not doubt my condemnation of the unseemly incident in S. Paul's Cathedral, which you have taken as an occasion for writing to me. Not by action of that sort can the cause of truth be reasonably set forward. But, speaking generally, I think you mistake what it is that has evoked from cultured men with scientific and philosophical, as well as theological, knowledge, vehement reprobation of some of your recent utterances.

With regard to these I have probably received, publicly or privately, more communications than any one except yourself.

I do not attach great weight to the denunciations of what I have heard described as 'The Gorilla Sermons.' I believe that you overrate the adherence of thoughtful people to creation theories of fifty to a hundred years ago, and I scarcely think that among those who listen to you there are a great number who hold

¹ *The Times*, October 24, 1927.

the opinions which you satirize. For myself, at least, I can say that your position on the biological question, in outline and so far as I understand it, is one with which I personally have been familiar for more than fifty years. Believe me, this teaching, however admirable, is to most of us not novel, and I do not think that those who hear you on the subject with interest and advantage would recognize themselves as 'wistful agnostics.'

As far as I can judge, it is not on what you have said with regard to that branch of science or theology that the attention of thoughtful men has been centred. It is too familiar. You may, I am certain, dismiss, my dear bishop, the fear that any one in England desires to lead or drive you either to Rome or to Tennessee. The words which give rise to the sort of indignation I refer to are the words which you use in dealing with the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It is on what you have said respecting sacramental doctrine that intelligent and large-minded Churchmen, lay as well as clerical, have approached me day by day.

I have an intense dislike to the use of the daily Press for the discussion of such subjects. I purposely refrain from trying in such a letter as this to discuss the profound and life-giving doctrines involved, but, of course, I am more than ready to go into the matter with yourself, at any time should you so desire. But your open letter forces me, however reluctantly, to some reply.

Formally and publicly, you invite me 'to consider what steps can be taken to help those of us who are giving of our best to fit the Church to be in the future the spiritual guide of an educated nation.' That is a large and difficult matter needing time and care, but I can say at once that, in my judgement, one of the first steps is to secure the scrupulous use of the most careful language possible in dealing with doctrinal matters of deep solemnity, which affect the devotional thoughts and prayers of Christian people.

That duty, obligatory upon every Christian teacher, is peculiarly incumbent upon us bishops, who have to weigh the effect of our words upon all sections of the great body to whom we desire to be Fathers in God. We promised on our consecration day to be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's

word, and while, as you have truly said, 'smooth unctuous platitudes' are not enough, yet in all the range of our duties there is none which calls more clearly for the exercise of tender and fatherly carefulness in word and act.

Now in your open letter to myself, you assure me that what you have been lately doing and have been denounced for doing is as 'a bishop of the Church of England' to 'uphold its traditional sacramental doctrine, and to affirm'—as we all affirm—that 'the doctrine of transubstantiation is untrue.'

Do not suppose me to be unmindful of our duty to stem whatever trend there is that way. The duty is clear. But when I turn to the Birmingham sermon, which aroused criticism, I find that the statement you make to me fails to describe fairly what you there said. In your natural and legitimate desire to denounce the few in the Church of England who hold or teach the doctrine of transubstantiation, you were led to speak of the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a way which—quite reasonably, as I think—gives real offence to the great body of devout Churchmen and Churchwomen, and not least to those who are able to give scholarly, as well as reverent, consideration to the sacramental doctrines which our Church upholds.

I do not believe that you had any intention of wounding the souls of honest and faithful English Churchmen, but you ignore, or belittle, the position and teaching of those within our Church who stand in the tradition of such English bishops as Andrewes, or Ken, or Wilson, or in our own day Edward King or Charles Gore. Nay, more, your words seem to me capable of being so interpreted as to include in reprobation, or almost in contempt, the position of the great mass of Churchmen who would associate themselves with the teaching of such leaders as, say, my own great masters, Bishop Lightfoot or Bishop Westcott, or who have caught the devotional spirit of the hymns of Charles Wesley. I prefer to think that if you re-read your Birmingham sermon in the light of such criticism as your letter has drawn from me, you will feel that what I have said is not unfair.

You say in your letter that your teaching is 'positive and unreported.' Your Birmingham sermon, however, contains some such positive teaching. And as I read your words about the grace of our Saviour's presence through the whole act of worship,

they leave me wondering whether, if you were to consider what are their implications, you would not find further cause to modify the width and scope of your negative and destructive statements.

We have all been impressed in these recent months by the self-restraint and the considerateness for others shown by many of the clergy and laity who have been foremost in our Prayer Book discussions. To the larger tasks which lie beyond these discussions we bishops must lead the way. But we shall lead only if we walk 'with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

CHAPTER VIII

MORE PROTESTS

HITHERTO, apart from the statement by the Bishop of London to which we have referred in the preceding chapter,¹ the one public censure on Dr. Barnes from his brother bishops had been a statement by the Bishop of Hereford, who, at a meeting of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement on January 13, 1927, protested against the provocative language used by the Bishop of Birmingham. After the publication of Dr. Barnes' open letter to the Archbishop, many other bishops joined in the chorus of condemnation. The present Archbishop of Canterbury, then Archbishop of York, addressing a meeting of men in the Theatre Royal, York, said : ²

How sad, how humiliating, that around so gracious and wonderful a gift of Divine condescension as that revealed in the Sacrament of the Communion there should have arisen these embittered controversies : but it is always so, and they have broken out in these last weeks by the utterances of the Bishop of Birmingham. I wish I could be silent about these utterances. I dislike more than I can say taking any public part in any controversies about the words with which feeble man attempts to express a mystery so profound, and yet a mystery which the

¹ See p. 90 above.

² *The Times*, October 24, 1927.

Lord himself intended us, by this so simple act, to be able thankfully and quietly to receive : and it is distasteful to me beyond words to criticize a man for whose ability and earnestness I have the greatest respect, and who is a brother bishop. Yet I am told by some whose counsel I am bound to heed that my silence may be misconstrued, and that I owe it to my own people to speak.

I cannot but deplore the methods in which the bishop conducts his controversy. Surely, it is the first duty of a Christian, not least of a Christian bishop, to try to understand the opinions of those whom he criticizes, to see first what measure of truth may be in them, before he denounces what he believes to be erroneous. But the bishop seems almost obstinate in his inability to understand. There are, indeed, certain crude and exaggerated expressions of belief in the reality of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament, which it is well to exclude from the thoughts with which men surround that holy mystery, but he seems to cover with the scorn with which he treats those crudities and exaggerations a great realm of belief which is contained within the formularies of the Church of which he is a bishop, and which underlies the thankful experience of the whole historic Catholic Church of Christ from the beginning, and it is in terms which, he must know, wound the most hallowed convictions of multitudes of his own flock and fellow Churchmen. I cannot bring myself to think that this is the spirit which should animate a Christian thinker and teacher.

The bishop seems to me to impart into his discussions conceptions and methods which may be appropriate so far as mathematics and physics, with which he is familiar, are concerned, but which are quite inappropriate in the sphere of spiritual experience. Indeed, the whole conception of the relations of the material and the spiritual, so far as I can estimate his own views, which he holds, seems to me strangely narrow and meagre, and out of accord with new trends of even scientific thought. The material is always penetrated by the spirit. Is there no gift of the spirit to matter when the sympathy of a friend is conveyed through the pressure of the material hand, when the love of a friend looks out through the material eye, when the vision of the artist speaks through the material lines and colour, and when the

musician, as Browning said, out of three sounds makes, not a fourth sound, but a star—something wonderful and apart which fills these material sounds with spiritual reality? Is there, then, anything incredible in the belief that by the Spirit of God there is given to material bread and wine the gift of the spiritual reality of Christ's Presence? It is, indeed, by faith that we ourselves can make the gift of this reality—not less real because it is spiritual—real to ourselves. It is our faith, halting and imperfect, our emotions, varying and inconstant, which create that given for us and to us by the life-giving Spirit of God.

The Bishop of Winchester, addressing the Winchester Diocesan Conference on October 21, 1927, said :¹

It is hateful for a bishop to criticize publicly any utterance of a fellow bishop, but so much evidence has reached me, during these last days, of the infinite pain caused to great numbers of our Church people by the recent utterances of the Bishop of Birmingham, that the matter cannot be passed over in silence.

I wish to be just, and say at once that I have a profound respect for the bishop's abilities. He has done, and I hope still will do, valuable service as a kind of liaison officer between the Church and science.

I would respectfully beg him to think, and think again, of the pain he causes by the contemptuous tone which he not infrequently uses towards those whose beliefs he does not share.

Religion is a big thing, and we must have big ways of looking at it. Those to whom the subjective makes the strongest appeal have no right to denounce as superstitious those who, by temperament or training, are more concerned with the objective.

The action of God in the Sacraments is not scientifically definable. It moves on a plane and in a world of which science, in the ordinary acceptance of the word, knows nothing, and of which it is not competent to speak.

Moreover, to talk of submitting the consecrated elements to a physical test, is both irreverent and irrelevant. You may as well talk of measuring heaven with a foot-rule.

¹ *Yorkshire Post*, October 22, 1927.

The Bishop of Southwark, preaching at S. Anne's, South Lambeth, said :¹

There can be no doubt that our Church of England does most clearly teach the Real Presence of our Lord. This belief is entirely distinct from the materialistic doctrine of transubstantiation. I regret to say, in a recent letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Barnes seems to identify belief in the Real Presence with the doctrine of transubstantiation. Nothing could be further from the truth. . . . We must approach the Holy Communion with the utmost reverence. We expect reverence from those who speak about it, even if they disagree with us. We expect them to refrain from controversial and uncharitable phrases such as 'magic' and 'superstition,' which can only hurt in word, and never quite convince. The writer to whom I have referred, in a much discussed sermon, spoke about applying tests to the Holy Communion. Material tests would produce no results. You might as well hand a Bible and the latest novel to a man who could not read, and ask him to test them by chemical process, and say what was the spiritual difference between the two.

Bishop Russell Wakefield, in a letter to the *Daily Mail*,² said :

I am asked whether I have anything to say with regard to my successor's recent public utterances on religious matters. I am very reluctant to add to the amount of comment already made by men of far greater theological knowledge than I possess, but as far as I can judge, I cannot easily be silent upon what Dr. Barnes has said as to the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Communion. For, if he is right, I was faithless in not bringing into Court during my diocesan government very many of my most devoted clergy. If there be no Presence of our Blessed Lord in the great Sacrament; if the Consecration of the Elements has no effect, then my clergy taught erroneous doctrine, and used unmeaning ceremonial. Dr. Barnes is not out against transubstantiation only; he is against every special Presence, however

¹ *Daily News*, October 22, 1927. ² October 22, 1927.

spiritual it may be. . . . It is just because the spiritual is so much grander than the physical, that the whole service is the most glorious we can render, and that if the Sacrament is reserved, the surroundings of that Reservation must be of the utmost reverence.

The Bishop of Durham described Dr. Barnes' 'midday speech in his own city on sacramental doctrine as a regrettable breach of good taste.'¹

The Bishop of Lichfield, in his pastoral letter of November, 1927, made use of the occasion to reaffirm his belief in the Objective Real Presence.

The Bishop of Middleton, in a statement to the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*,² said that he felt that Dr. Barnes' way of speaking of the sacramental opinions of those with whom he disagreed, failed lamentably in doing justice to their piety, sincerity, and learning. 'I am not surprised,' he continued, 'that they are indignant.'

The Bishop of Plymouth said : 3

Dr. Barnes thinks he can settle with a few cheap epigrams what has exercised the minds of the world's greatest thinkers for hundreds of years.

Bishop Welldon said : 4

The Bishop of Birmingham chooses what is, to my mind, an absurd exaggeration of sacred belief. He holds it up to scorn, as if it were a belief verily entertained by devout Anglo-Catholic members of the Church of England. Not the most extreme advocate of transubstantiation itself would represent alleged

¹ *Record*, October 10, 1927.

² October 20, 1927.

³ *Yorkshire Post*, October 31, 1927.

⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, October 21, 1927.

change in the substance of bread or wine, as being something which could be detected by chemical analysis. It is much to be desired that the Bishop of Birmingham should try to realize the significance of theological language, which is part of the Church's inheritance.

The editorial comments of the leading newspapers and reviews, while in some cases sympathetic with the Bishop of Birmingham's beliefs, show clearly that public opinion supported the Archbishop's action in rebuking Dr. Barnes for his provocative language. We have only space for a few quotations. *The Times*¹ said :

The answer of the Archbishop of Canterbury is a complete reply. . . . The Archbishop is chiefly concerned to point out the two main mistakes that the Bishop of Birmingham has made, and this he does with a luminous clearness, that reduces the whole affair to its right proportions.

The *Morning Post*² made the following comment :

The Archbishop writes with a sincerity and firmness and a wide charity, which will secure the assent of all who recognize in him their spiritual leader. What Dr. Davidson does in effect, is to remind Dr. Barnes, and by consequence all members of the Church, that while the doctrine of transubstantiation is untrue, and that while those in the Church of England who hold or teach that doctrine should be denounced, there is a wide gulf fixed between a belief in transubstantiation and the purely scientific view of the Elements, which led Dr. Barnes to invite us all to subject the Bread and Wine to a microscopic examination under a powerful lens.

The *Yorkshire Post*³ said :

The Archbishop frankly and courageously seizes upon the

¹ October 25, 1927.

² October 24, 1927.

³ October 24, 1927.

real issue, which is not that Dr. Barnes believes in modern theories of evolution or that he denounces, with the Church, belief in transubstantiation, but that his reflections on those who do not share his own interpretation of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper have been couched in language actually hurtful, and unjustifiably contemptuous. . . . The issue is not whether Dr. Barnes is right, and his opponents wrong. The issue is whether the manner in which Dr. Barnes has conducted his side of the controversy is seemly in a bishop, or is even Christian. It is so apparently that the Archbishop has seen the issue, and his gentle but firm rebuke will be welcomed by the great body of Churchmen. It is itself an object lesson to the Bishop of Birmingham. Even those Churchmen who have not been bitterly affronted by Dr. Barnes' comparison of their worship to the idolatry of the Hindus, have felt perturbed by his persistent attempts, in the fine metaphor of the Bishop of Winchester, to 'measure heaven with a foot-rule.' Only a sense of Christian fitness has prevented many such from joining in public controversy.

*The Daily News*¹ said :

The Archbishop of Canterbury's reply is a characteristic example of his paternal method in controversy, and of his own peaceful temper. Yet its meaning is unmistakable. The rebuke is there, explicit and implicit. What his Grace really objects to is the use of the bludgeon in sacred matters. He will not acquiesce in Dr. Barnes' verbal brutalities in discussing the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

*The Spectator*² said :

Although the bishop is careful to use the language of the rubrics in his open letter, the general effect of it is too savage. He complains of the revival of mediaeval sacramental teaching, but his own may be objected to on similar grounds. It is mediaeval in fierceness. . . . We believe that no one can render greater service to doubting laymen than the Bishop of Birmingham can, but they will not be helped nearly as much

¹ October 24, 1927.

² October 22, 1927.

as they might be if he employs a harshness, which in effect will be as exclusive as the extreme sacerdotalists wish their own system to be.

The *Saturday Review*¹ said :

What has offended a large body of sincere persons within the Church, and even without, is the tone Dr. Barnes has adopted regarding sacramental doctrine. . . . It is no more than his common duty to voice what he believes to be true ; it is in his assumption of a monopoly of truth in what must be described as the arrogance, the uncharitableness, the intellectual scorn of this assumption that his offence lies. . . . Throughout the term of his episcopate at Birmingham, he has displayed the same deplorable lack of tact in dealing with those within his jurisdiction whose ritualistic views differ from his own. Through a fundamental fault of temperament, a sincere and brilliantly gifted man has made a failure of his office.

Finally, we would quote the following significant comment from the *Jewish World* :²

It were folly to suppose that those who think with Dr. Barnes have in mind only the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the real presence. If that goes by the board, then other Christian dogma no less well founded in Christian doctrine must go also. And indeed, the Bishop of Birmingham, and other Church leaders, have attacked other teachings than this, that are credal. As a result there is sure to be a copious overhauling of all Christian theology. Jews, who for centuries have stood out as passive protesters against a doctrine based upon the belief in the Divinity of Jesus, cannot look on at the present happenings unmoved, particularly as they believe that the elimination of such dogma as that now repudiated by the Bishop of Birmingham must make for a truer and better conception of God, and for the knowledge of him filling all the earth.

The sermon preached by Dr. Barnes at Westminster Abbey on June 9, 1929,³ produced

¹ October 29, 1927. ² October 27, 1927. ³ See p. 80.

another protest, this time in the Upper House of Convocation. The subject under discussion was a resolution, moved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, embodying the proposals of the bishops for meeting the situation created by the second defeat of the Prayer Book Measure in the House of Commons. The Bishop of Birmingham had moved an amendment, in the form of a rider, to affirm that 'Nothing in the Resolution purports to change the law and doctrine of the Church of England as contained in the Prayer Book of 1662, or to imply censure on those bishops who feel bound to refuse to permit the practice of Reservation, and the use of an alternative service of Holy Communion.' We take our account of the incident from a summary in *The Times* :¹

The Bishop of St. Albans quoted from a sermon in which he said the Bishop of Birmingham had said that, while the old standards of belief had crumbled, no new orthodoxy had been set forth. He (the Bishop of St. Albans) did not know what Dr. Barnes meant, but he interpreted it as meaning that they could believe what they liked.

The Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Barnes) immediately rose to interrupt, saying : 'I must protest against the Bishop of St. Albans quoting one part of a sermon of considerable length. At the end of that sermon I put forward positive requirements which I thought were demanded of a candidate desiring to take Holy Orders. They were put out very explicitly. Had I known the Bishop of St. Albans was going to raise the subject, I would have had them here, but the sermon was one appealing to the best of the young men of our time to come forward in the ministry of our Church.'

¹ July 12, 1929.

The Bishop of St. Albans : ' I have it here *in extenso*.'

The Bishop of Birmingham : ' Would you kindly read it ?'

The Archbishop of Canterbury (interrupting) said that he must appeal for consideration of the time of the House. The Bishop of Birmingham had many opportunities of making public his views, and he did not think they should be subjected to the cross-examination of the House at that time.

The Bishop of St. Albans, continuing, said : ' I want to protest against any Bishop who makes that astonishing statement in itself, especially when he comes as a member of this House, asking us practically to endorse the way he is administering his diocese with regard to Reservation. He claims liberty for himself and others in freedom of belief, and absolutely refuses to allow freedom of belief to be expressed in certain ways by others. I wish to protest against the language he uses about those he disagrees with. In regard to this Prayer Book proposal, he says that the Bishops have made what, indeed, seems to him to be concessions to religious barbarism. That is how he describes it, I presume——'

The Bishop of Birmingham (again interrupting) : ' I hope the Bishop of St. Albans will kindly continue that quotation.'

The Archbishop of Canterbury again intervened to say that the Bishop of Birmingham so frequently used language of a vehement kind that he must not be surprised if any of his brethren wish to call attention to its implications, but they should not allow their time to be taken up by considering what the Bishop of Birmingham did or did not mean.

' I still want to protest,' continued the Bishop of St. Albans, ' not only about the language which the Bishop of Birmingham uses regarding us, but also about the language which is hurting the feelings and religious susceptibilities of thousands of people in this country and throughout the world, such as the description of the statue of the Madonna and the Holy Child as that of "a female figure with a child."¹ Language such as that is fraught with sinister and far-reaching dangers to the peace of the Church of England. . . .

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in closing the debate, said

¹ The letter in which this phrase occurs is quoted in full on p. 116.

that a feature of the discussion which gave him regret was the necessity under which the Bishop of Birmingham seemed to feel of rising continually to make explanations of words that from time to time he had used. He proceeded: 'I feel bound here to make an appeal to the Bishop of Birmingham in the interests of the Church. I think the fact that it is necessary for him from time to time to give explanations of the phrases he uses must indicate to him that there is something in them that makes them peculiarly liable to misunderstanding. The Bishop can scarcely realize that every day I receive from every part of the Church, both in this country and across the seas, and from representatives of every section of the Church, indignant protests against the kind of language by which the Bishop of Birmingham—I think it must be inadvertently—wounds the consciences and feelings of so many of his brother Churchmen. I find it most difficult to reply to these ceaseless communications, and can only say that it must definitely add to the already immense difficulties which the Church of England has to face. And I would, in the most friendly way, make my appeal to the Bishop of Birmingham that, in the development of what he feels to be right, and in the enunciation of truths which he feels to be important, he should endeavour to refrain from the use of provocative language which cannot advance his cause, and does a great deal to disturb the whole life and movement of the Church of England at the present time. I do not wish to say more, but I have more reasons than perhaps your lordships think to feel obliged to say at least this.'

We may fitly close this chapter with the following extract from a leading article in *The Times*¹ commenting on this incident :

It is the business of a bishop to administer his diocese. But it is not the business of a bishop to impose his individual opinion, especially when it is at variance with the considered judgement of the great majority of his fellow bishops as an infallible standard of creed and ritual from which any dissidence in his diocese is to be deemed an act of rebellion. A wide latitude of views is permissible enough among the bishops, as among other members

¹ July 13, 1929.

of the Church, and it may well be that the theological views of the Bishop of Birmingham, for instance, are very widely held. Certainly, they are not so uncommon or so original as his language sometimes suggests. In his case, the difficulty seems to be not so much one of doctrine as of manners ; and the lack of courtesy with which he permits himself to speak of the cherished religious convictions of other people, would quickly bring him into the same difficulty in any other responsible position. There is a strong and growing feeling in these days, that the peace and order of the Church as a whole are not to be endangered by a small group of extremist clergy. It would be even more lamentable if the united efforts of the episcopate and the lower Houses of Convocation this week were to be stultified by any failure of charity on the part of a tiny section of the bishops themselves.

CHAPTER IX

LATER STAGES OF THE CONTROVERSY

AFTER the final rejection of the Prayer Book Measure by the House of Commons, the Bishop's attitude hardened, and he determined to banish Reservation from the diocese altogether. The first public intimation of this new policy was given at the licensing of a new Vicar to the Church of S. Barnabas, Balsall Heath. In his address, the Bishop said¹ that about a year after he came to Birmingham as Bishop, in the endeavour to carry out the policy of restoring order which he took upon himself, he felt it necessary to ask that certain things connected with Public Worship should be discontinued. At that time he adopted an attitude as liberal as he felt he could readily make it, and he asked that there should be no public Reservation of the Consecrated Elements of the Holy Communion, lest, in connection therewith, there should grow up those unauthorized services, copied from Roman usage, which the Church rightly repudiated at the Reformation, as involving unsound doctrine. Since then there

¹ *Birmingham Post*, March 23, 1929.

had come the decision of Parliament (a right decision as he thought) that Reservation of the Consecrated Elements should be made illegal. In consequence, he felt that for the future, in instituting a new vicar to any parish, he must demand that the illegal practice of Reservation should cease.

An interesting light is thrown on the Bishop's new policy, in an interview he gave to the Rev. F. A. Iremonger in 1928.¹ In the course of this interview, Dr. Barnes said :

The bishops are placed in office, as I have already said, to administer the law of the land.

Now, when a clergyman is instituted to a benefice, he solemnly undertakes to use in public worship the services of the Prayer Book and none other. He also swears that he will give due and canonical obedience to his bishop in all things lawful and honest. He obtains his benefice on these conditions. If he were not willing to give such a pledge and to take such an oath, he would not be made an incumbent. I say then that if, after institution, he proceeds to use other services than those of the Prayer Book, and to flout his bishop's protests, he ought not to receive his stipend. In such circumstances, it should be possible for the bishop—there would, of course, be a right of appeal to the Archbishop or ultimately to the High Court—to prevent the payment of stipend. If a disloyal clergyman could, without an official stipend, maintain himself by the aid of such congregation as he could gather, I would, somewhat illogically, leave him to go his own way until he died. Naturally, before instituting another minister to a parish with such an unfortunate history, the bishop would demand personal assurance of loyalty to the law. He would, I conceive, ask for a statement from the

¹ F. A. Iremonger, *Men and Movements in the Church* (Longmans).

incoming minister that he regarded both the Declaration of Assent and the Oath of Canonical Obedience as solemn obligations and not empty formalities.

But surely, asked the Interviewer, you have no right to demand that a clergyman should sign any such statement?

I do not know, replied Dr. Barnes, what the lawyers would say: the existing law rests on the natural assumption that the declarations and oaths impose solemn obligations. But I am clear in my own mind as to the course to be taken. As bishop, I have to maintain sound doctrine 'as this Church and Realm have received the same.' I do not press that the clergy of my diocese should pay meticulous regard to the forms of the Prayer Book: but it is my duty to see that no variations are made which imply false doctrine or involve serious departures from the appointed order. Moreover, it is for me, as bishop, to demand this general conformity to the law; an incumbent has no right to disregard alike the law and his bishop's injunctions. If any man is presented to me for institution to a benefice who intends to be a law unto himself, I will refuse institution. If the patrons then take legal proceedings I shall, as a good Churchman, refuse to defend my action: and in the end I shall have to go to prison for contempt of court. As soon as this shall happen, an invincible movement will arise for the strengthening of the bishop's powers to enforce the law.

In March, 1929, the conflict broke out afresh in connection with the vacancy in the living of the Church of the Ascension, Stirchley, whose Vicar, the Rev. Hubert Noke, was cut off prematurely during the influenza epidemic, in the midst of a life of self-denying and devoted service. On March 2nd, the Rev. R. V. Lyle, the assistant priest, wrote to the Bishop telling him of his Vicar's death, and on March 4th, the day of the funeral, he received the following reply: ¹

¹ *Birmingham Post*, July 5, 1929.

I thank you for your kindness in writing to me with regard to Mr. Noke's death. Your letter gives me the opportunity of saying how much I regret that Stirchley should in the past have been one of the so-called 'rebel' churches of the diocese. I trust that I may have your co-operation in restoring there the lawful order and association with diocesan life which are happily characteristic of the vast majority of the churches of the diocese.

To this letter Father Lyle did not reply, and on May 11th the Bishop wrote to him again as follows :

I have seen Mr. Dunn, the rural dean and patron of Stirchley, since the meeting which he had on Monday last with the Parochial Church Council of Stirchley. I am sorry to hear from him that at this meeting he was led to believe from your own words and attitude that you would oppose my order that certain ornaments illegally placed in the church should be removed before the institution of a new incumbent. These ornaments are for the most part connected with superstitious uses not countenanced by the sound doctrine of our Church ; they are, in particular, a tabernacle placed on a Holy Table in the north aisle, a female figure with a child, before which candles burn, at the entrance to the chancel, and two ' Holy Water ' stoups. There are also certain other changes which I shall require, but which I need not now enumerate. I gather from Mr. Dunn, that in particular, you said that you had the key of the tabernacle, and were not prepared to give it up. I trust that the impression of your attitude which he obtained is erroneous, and I would repeat what I said in a letter to you on March 4th last, to which you did not reply.

Will you please give me this assurance of loyal co-operation, and, after having emptied the tabernacle of any reserved elements which may be in it and having locked it when empty, will you please send me all the keys which may open it ?

Father Lyle acknowledged this letter formally, and asked to be allowed to send a considered reply in due course. On June 7th he wrote :

The matter was of such importance that I felt I must seek legal advice, and I have been informed on counsel's opinion, that even if the ornaments, etc., in question are illegal (which is not admitted under existing decisions) or were illegally placed in the church, they cannot be legally removed from the church by any one without a faculty for their removal issuing from the Consistory Court after judicial hearing.

On these grounds I am advised that I ought not to comply with your request, as by so doing I should be breaking the law, and should render myself liable to proceedings against myself in the courts.

The Bishop in his reply, dated June 11th, wrote:

You neither give me the assurance, nor have you sent me the key, although you hold my licence only in virtue of the oath of canonical obedience to me. Instead of the assurance of loyalty, you quote a legal opinion as to formalities alleged to be necessary before the removal of illegal ornaments admittedly introduced without lawful authority. As regards the fact that you have ignored my request for the key, I would remind you that public reservation in a tabernacle on a Holy Table, and the service of Devotions in connection therewith which you have publicly taken at Starchley, are contrary to the promise made by you in the Declaration of Assent, which you took before your licence was granted. I may add that the practice and the service would be alike illegal had the abortive Prayer Book proposals been accepted by Parliament.

In view of these facts, and quite apart from the merits of the legal opinion which you quote, I regret to say that unless I can have your compliance with my request before Thursday, June 20th next, I shall feel compelled to instruct my legal secretary at once to cancel your licence. I shall take this step with great reluctance, but my opportunity of putting an end to illegal practices at so-called 'rebel' churches occurs when the benefice is vacant, and I must not be withheld from my duty at such a time by the refusal of an assistant-curate to give me, as his bishop, loyal obedience.

I am, of course, willing to see you at any time we can arrange, if an interview will help you to understand the position.

Father Lyle then brought this correspondence before a meeting of his Parochial Church Council, who assured him of their unanimous support, and instructed their secretary to send the following letter to the Bishop, under date June 17th :

We have learned with deep regret your Lordship's decision to cancel Mr. Lyle's licence unless he discontinues to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the Ascension, Stirchley, and sends the keys of the tabernacle to you before Thursday, June 20th.

We would respectfully point out to your Lordship that Mr. Lyle is simply continuing a practice which was sanctioned by your predecessor, Bishop Russell Wakefield, and, with this sanction, commenced by our late vicar. The Sacrament has been reserved in our church for years, and during that time it has constantly been used for the communion of the sick. We, the laity of the church, feel that we ought not to be deprived of this great spiritual blessing, and that Mr. Lyle, who is in no way responsible for the introduction of Reservation, ought not to be the person asked to discontinue it.

Your Lordship has not made any inquiries as to whether or not Reservation is necessary for the needs of this large parish ; and in view of the fact that many bishops are willing to grant Reservation in their respective dioceses, we feel that we are not being fairly treated, when you thus forbid it and, at the same time, threaten such severe penalties upon Mr. Lyle for considering our interests.

On these grounds, we ask you to reconsider your decision and to allow the present condition to continue until our new vicar is able to take over the affairs of the parish.

Father Lyle then had an interview with the Bishop, which proved fruitless except that the Bishop said he would accept Father Lyle's resignation instead of cancelling his licence. Thereupon,

on June 25th, Father Lyle wrote to the Bishop as follows :

I have given the most careful consideration to your directions and to what you said to me at our interview, and regret that I do not feel able to do what you wish.

With regard to sending you the keys of the tabernacle, I am legally advised that these keys essentially belong to the tabernacle itself, and that I have no more right legally to send these keys out of the church, except in obedience to a faculty for their removal, than I would have to deal in the same manner with any other item of the property of the church.

With regard to ceasing the practice of Reservation, in view of the fact that I had no responsibility for introducing it, that the Church Council are unanimously opposed to my giving it up, and taking into account also my own most sincere religious convictions, I cannot assume the responsibility which you ask me to undertake.

I feel, therefore, that I have no alternative but to place my resignation as assistant-curate of Stinchley in your hands, and I trust it will be agreeable to your Lordship if such resignation shall take effect in a month's time, on Thursday, July 25th.

On June 27th the Bishop sent the following reply :

I beg to acknowledge your letter of June 25th. I accept your resignation of the assistant-curacy of the Church of the Ascension, Stinchley, as from July 25th next. In doing so, I would again express my regret that in public worship you have repudiated, and, as I understand, are continuing to repudiate, the promise which you made in the declaration of assent ; and further that, in spite of your oath of canonical obedience, you refuse to obey my directions to cease from usages in public worship which are unlawful and based upon unsound doctrine.

On July 1st the Bishop sent the following reply to the Secretary of the Church Council :

I beg to acknowledge the memorandum sent on behalf of the

Parochial Church Council of the Church of the Ascension, Stirchley. To it I have given careful attention.

In reply I would say that the reservation of the consecrated elements of the Holy Communion desired by your Council is illegal. It leads, moreover, to the unsound belief that such elements have spiritual properties. From this error of the Roman Church our own Church was freed at the Reformation. Where it persists, the elements are treated as if they were to be given a sort of reverence, which, I would remind you, we rightly give to God alone. The root of idolatry is to be found in the belief that when an image is blessed by a priest, the spiritual presence of the god comes within it. In this belief, the idol is worshipped. Now you yourselves at Stirchley have of late had before the consecrated elements an illegal service known as Devotions. Such a service and the belief associated with it alienate thoughtful people and cause them wrongly to regard our Church as superstitious. Hence I am resolved that this service and reservation must in future cease, and I will not institute a new incumbent to Stirchley unless he first gives me a promise that they shall cease.

If my predecessor, as you state, gave permission for reservation at Stirchley, he was acting illegally, and I most certainly am not bound by any such action. Moreover, the tabernacle in which reservation has taken place was unlawfully placed in your church; no faculty was obtained, and the courts have ruled that no such faculty can legally be granted. The tabernacle must be removed together with other illegal 'ornaments' which I have previously specified.

In the past your church has been one of the so-called 'rebel' churches of the diocese. I have been distressed by this fact, and still more because I have had from parishioners of Stirchley many complaints with regard to the services which, notwithstanding my requests as bishop, have been customary within it. There is no doubt that the views and desires of the present Parochial Council are not those of the generality of Church people in the parish. I urge that those of your Council who desire Roman Catholic uses based upon the erroneous doctrine of transubstantiation, should join the Roman Church. The others I ask to welcome a new incumbent who will maintain the sound

doctrine and tradition of our Church, and who will persuade his people to join in the corporate life of the diocese. Thus I trust that a new and happier era will arise in which your church will fulfil the hopes of those who built it, and meet the spiritual needs of loyal Church people in the parish.

Interviewed by a reporter of the *Birmingham Post*, the Bishop said that he would not allow any clergyman to take duty who did not undertake to discontinue alike the practice of Reservation and the illegal service known as 'Devotions.' He further stated that he would require from any incumbent presented for institution a letter in the following terms :¹

In asking you to institute me to the benefice of Stirchley, I write to say at your request that I am willing in public worship to obey the regulations of the Prayer Book (or, alternatively, of any Revised Prayer Book which may become lawful), and that I will not depart from the law as therein set forth unless I have it from you in writing that you will raise no objection to action such as I may desire to take. I will also urge the Parochial Church Council to contribute the assessment made by the Diocesan Board of Finance.

By such insistence, the Bishop said, he thought that gradually, as they became vacant, the relatively few 'rebel' churches of the diocese would cease the illegalities against which he felt bound to protest, and again associate themselves fully with diocesan work.

Dr. Barnes' right to order the removal of the ornaments was challenged by the Chancellor of

¹ *Birmingham Post*, July 5, 1929.

the Diocese, Sir (then Mr.) E. W. Hansell, who, on July 10th, wrote to the Bishop as follows :¹

I have read in the *Church Times* of the 5th inst. what doubtless is a correct copy of certain correspondence which has passed between your Lordship and the Rev. R. V. Lyle, then, and still, Curate of Stirchley, and the Parochial Church Council. From this it would appear that on the death of the vicar you ordered the removal from the church of certain articles or ornaments, and stated that you would require other changes.

Such an order to whomsoever addressed constitutes a serious invasion of the functions and jurisdiction assigned to the Consistory Court of the diocese, and by his patent to the Chancellor as judge thereof.

Articles of a substantial and permanent nature, e.g. a statue (the Court does not concern itself with trivial matters such as hassocks), can only be rightly removed if, and when, an order for removal made in a properly constituted suit by the judge of the court has been obtained, and not on the mere motion of any one else.

As judge of the Diocesan Court, with all due respect to your high office, I feel bound to make a protest against this usurpation of jurisdiction, and to express the earnest hope that now that the matter has been brought to your attention, you may see fit to refrain from like action in the future.

The Bishop replied on July 31st, as follows :

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of July 10th, in which you refer to certain communications which passed between a clergyman then holding my licence, and myself. I am well aware that it would not be right for me to interfere with your jurisdiction, and in the event of an application being made to you for the grant of a faculty, either for erecting or removing an ornament of the church, I should not presume publicly to intervene.

I feel bound, however, to remind you that I have duties to perform which are entirely outside the functions and jurisdiction

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, August 2, 1929.

assigned to the Consistory Court of the diocese, and, if you will allow me to say so, I must use my own judgement as to the occasions on which I shall direct my clergy in regard to the observance of the law.

If in the case in question a faculty is required for the removal of certain articles or ornaments, which, in my judgement, have been placed in the church without due authority, no doubt an application will be made by the persons concerned in due course.

I presume that you would not question my right to direct any of my clergy that it is their duty to apply for a faculty in certain cases. So far as the case of Stirchley is concerned, I do not propose to relinquish my right to enjoin one of my clergy to remove articles which I am informed have been placed in the church without any authority whatsoever.

As you have thought fit to complain to me of what you describe as the usurpation of your jurisdiction, I hope I may be allowed to say I think that it would have been better for the judge of the Consistory Court of the diocese to refrain from taking an active part in the movement of certain clergy in the diocese to resist my episcopal authority.

Your contribution to the fund which was raised in connection with the so-called group of 'rebel' churches to which Stirchley belonged was an unfortunate episode, which could not fail to diminish the respect which all Churchmen would desire to pay to the Chancellor of the diocese.

The Stirchley Church Council unanimously addressed an appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Lang, requesting him to intervene in the present situation, but his Grace replied that he was not able to take any action in the matter.

Meanwhile, they learned that the patron had offered the living to a clergyman who had given the Bishop the undertaking he required, but Dr. Barnes was unwilling to institute him until the ornaments to which he objected had been removed.

In September, six months having elapsed from the death of Father Noke, the right of presentation lapsed from the patron to the Bishop.

Dr. Barnes then warned the Council that he was not bound to institute the newly-appointed Vicar, and unless they removed the ornaments he would seriously consider putting in a man 'of modern views.' Thereupon, the Church Council passed a resolution, by twenty-one votes to six, at a meeting on September 30th, 'that we comply under protest with the Bishop's request for the removal of the tabernacle with statue and Holy Water stoups,' and that a letter be sent to the Bishop stating that they had complied with his instructions.

As a result, one of the churchwardens of Stirchley applied for a faculty authorizing the removal of the ornaments in question, the Bishop having informed him that he (Dr. Barnes) would meet all expenses. The faculty was opposed by Mr. Kendrick, who was chairman of the meeting on September 30th, and at a Consistory Court, the first ever held in the Birmingham Diocese, the Chancellor dismissed the petition on technical grounds. In the course of his judgement, the Chancellor said that he was much impressed by the anxious desire of the Church Council, probably against the real feelings and wishes of many of them, to do what they thought was best for the

good of the parish. Costs were given against the petitioner.

Notice of appeal was given against this decision, but other counsels prevailed, and on February 15, 1930, the Vicar-designate, having given assurances to the Bishop that, if licensed to the living, he would make application for a faculty for the removal of the ornaments referred to, was instituted to the benefice.

Meanwhile, a similar difficulty had arisen with regard to S. Aidan's, Small Heath, a church with a long-established Catholic tradition, whose Vicar, the Rev. A. H. Barlee, had been compelled, by doctor's orders, to resign. The patrons, one of whom is the Bishop of Truro, offered the living to the Rev. G. D. Simmonds, who was asked by the Bishop to give a similar assurance to that which had been demanded from the new Vicar of Stirchley.

After consultation with the patrons, the Vicar-designate replied to the Bishop on November 23rd, as follows :¹

While I am, of course, prepared to make the prescribed declarations, and to take the oaths required by law, I do not feel that I can conscientiously give the undertaking for which you ask.

The Bishop then asked if he would give an undertaking in the following modified form :²

¹ *Birmingham Post*, December 23, 1929.

² *ibid.*

In asking you to institute me to the vicarage of S. Aidan's, Small Heath, I write to say, at your request, that I am willing in public worship to obey the regulations of the Prayer Book or, alternatively, of any revised Prayer Book which may become lawful, and that I will not depart from the law as therein set forth, unless I have it from you in writing, that you will raise no objection to action such as I may desire to take. I understand that you will not permit reservation of the consecrated elements of the Holy Communion.

On December 3rd the Vicar-designate replied, stating that his objection to signing the undertaking in its original form was not removed by the modification indicated in the Bishop's letter. In answer to a letter of the same date from Dr. John Notley, one of the patrons of the living, the Bishop's legal secretary wrote that as the required undertaking had not been given, the Bishop refused to license.

The patrons thereupon decided to take legal action in the matter, and their solicitors wrote to the Bishop's legal secretary, informing him that they had been instructed to issue a writ against the Bishop for an order of the Court that Mr. Simmonds be licensed to S. Aidan's Church, and asking if he were in a position to accept service on behalf of his Lordship. The legal secretary replied on December 21st as follows :¹

His Lordship does not desire to put the trustees, who are the patrons of the living of S. Aidan's, or their legal advisers to any unnecessary inconvenience if they desire to resort to the Civil

¹ *Birmingham Post*, December 23, 1929.

Courts for the purpose of compelling him to institute a clerk whom in pursuance of spiritual obligations lawfully exercised by him he considers not to be a fit person for institution. Should your clients therefore decide to issue a writ I, as his Lordship's legal secretary, will accept service on his behalf.

His Lordship instructs me further to say that he does not propose to appear in the proceedings in view of the fact that the issue is not really a legal one at all, but a moral and spiritual one, and the law not in doubt. His decision, of course, is not intended to imply any disrespect to the Court, who, he feels sure, will have no difficulty in apprehending the facts.

The Bishop then sent the following statement to the Press :¹

An issue of fundamental importance with regard to order in the Church has arisen in connection with the benefice of S. Aidan's, Small Heath.

In November, 1925, I published a letter to the clergy of the diocese in which I asked *inter alia* that in public worship unauthorized services such as Benediction, Exposition, Devotions, Procession of the Host, etc., should cease. Such services, as I have often pointed out, imply erroneous doctrine akin to transubstantiation. They encourage false sacramental teaching, which I, as bishop, am pledged to banish and drive away. When my letter was written I did not, pending the final form and ultimate fate of the Prayer Book proposals, actually forbid the practice of Reservation, suitably safeguarded. Nevertheless, my request to the clergy was disobeyed by rather more than a dozen incumbents in Birmingham, who, moreover, banded themselves together to induce their people not to subscribe to diocesan funds.

Against these so-called ' rebel ' vicars I could successfully have taken legal action ; but in the existing state of the law the incumbents would ultimately have elected to go to prison for ignoring an order of the High Court of Justice, which I could have obtained. Now, when I was made bishop I resolved that I would not try to restore discipline in the diocese by legal action.

¹ *The Times*, December 23, 1929.

Before being instituted to a benefice every clergyman solemnly promises to use in public worship the form of the Prayer Book, and none other except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority. He also swears the oath of canonical obedience that he will obey the bishop in all things lawful and honest. I say that a clergyman has no right to set aside such solemn obligations : if he does so it is a grave moral fault which I will not try to correct by processes of law.

But naturally, when any ' rebel ' parish has fallen vacant, I have refused to institute as its next vicar any man presented to me unless I have an adequate assurance that he regards his promise and oath as binding. Hitherto, I have always received such an assurance. But at S. Aidan's the trustees (Dr. J. Notley, Canon C. N. Long, the Rev. J. J. Agar-Ellis, Mr. S. R. Shore, and the Bishop of Truro) propose to go to law to challenge my right to make such a demand.

If they succeed any diocesan bishop will in future have to institute a clergyman presented to him although that clergyman may intend to introduce the whole Roman sacramental system. The hope of restoring order in the Church will be at an end.

Our service of institution in Birmingham is most solemn and moving. In it, at the end, the bishop prays to God that he will give the newly-instituted minister ' grace truly to perform the solemn vows and promises by him made.' Now I will not turn such a prayer into a mockery : no Court of the realm could make me do it. If, however, I defended the proposed action, I might appear to allow that the Court had such power of compulsion. Hence, though I am assured that if I defended the suit I should win, I will not enter a defence. The issue is moral and spiritual, not legal. With all respect to the High Court the order which the trustees seek is not one which I could obey, were it issued.

I am told that when the action has been begun I may make no statement to the Press. Hence I now publish the relevant correspondence and ask that those who believe in the power of prayer will pray that God will guide the course of events, which we must leave in his hands.

The action came before Mr. Justice Bennett in the Chancery Division on Lady Day, 1930,

and was adjourned, the final hearing taking place on Wednesday, April 2nd. The Judge then made an Order that Mr. Simmonds should be admitted and licensed to the perpetual curacy in due form according to law, the Bishop having to pay the taxed costs.

There, at the moment of writing, the matter stands.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

WE have indicated in an earlier chapter that the main purpose of this book is neither to state a case against Dr. Barnes, nor to attempt to justify our action in resisting his demands ; but rather to place before the reader an orderly record of the sequence of events, and to leave him to draw his own conclusions. Thus it has been necessary, on the one hand, that we should refrain so far as is possible from a personal criticism of the Bishop's diocesan administration ; and, on the other (apart from stating the reasons for our resistance to his injunctions), from offering any defence of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist on which that resistance has been based. With regard to the latter, we would point out that the truth of the Real Objective Presence of our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament has been triumphantly vindicated by the great leaders of the Catholic Revival, and the right to teach it in the Church of England has not hitherto been seriously challenged for a generation. If we had believed that Dr. Barnes was expressing the mind of the English Church

in his assertion that Reservation is based upon erroneous doctrine, the question of obedience or disobedience would never have arisen ; the only course open to us would have been to resign forthwith our cures of souls.

At the same time, while we have no desire to attack others, and do not regard ourselves as being on our defence, there are certain general considerations arising out of this most unhappy dispute which, in justice to ourselves and to our brethren, we feel we ought to emphasize. We would desire, in the first place, to make it clear that we fully recognize the high honour and respect which are due to the office of a bishop in the Church of God. Indeed, one of our chief anxieties throughout the controversy has been lest our people should be led to think and speak contemptuously of the episcopate. It will be admitted that they have been subjected to the greatest provocation. Their priests are ostracized, their grants are withdrawn, their churches are placed under the episcopal ban, their methods of devotion are derided, and their most cherished beliefs openly condemned. In spite of this we can affirm that our laity have shown a wonderful forbearance. Their unfailing charity and their loyalty to the truth have been an inspiration to their clergy. There can be no doubt, however, that the circumstances of the last five years have made it exceed-

ingly difficult for them to realize the relations which ought to exist between the chief pastor of the diocese and his spiritual children.

We have served in this diocese under two bishops who have been true Fathers in God to us and to our people. These bishops visited our churches, worshipped with our congregations, and, on special occasions, celebrated the Holy Mysteries for them. Their presence with us was a great encouragement to the faithful, especially when these bishops came to administer Confirmation to our children in their parish church, the only spiritual home they have ever known. Under the present circumstances our parishes are deprived of the strength and support of our chief pastor, and they can hardly be said to be in a normal working state. We have constantly to be on our guard against our people becoming accustomed to the idea that episcopal activities are an 'extra' which can be dispensed with without much loss to the corporate life of the church.

It is not easy to estimate how grievously the moral force of the Church suffers when the Bishop of the diocese is thought and spoken of simply as a distinguished scholar, or as an administrator of the law, and not recognized as the father of his flock. Such a condition of affairs speedily destroys the corporate and family life which is so

essential to the well-being of any diocese. There is an absence, both in priest and people, of that confidence in their spiritual leader which makes them trust in his wisdom and impartiality ; and of the knowledge that they can depend upon him for sound guidance. It is against this dead weight of misunderstanding and lack of confidence that we and our people have had to pull during the past five years.

Secondly, we affirm that we are not enamoured of disobedience. On the contrary we hold that it is the solemn duty of a Catholic to obey constitutional authority in the Church, even when that authority is hostile to him, and when its judgements seem to him unwise, and perhaps unjust. Moreover, while this is the duty of all of us, clergy and laity alike, it is especially the duty of the clergy, since at our ordination we promised to pay canonical obedience to the bishop who ordained us, and to his successors. We have already given reasons in support of our contention that the injunctions we have resisted are not canonical, since they are based on grounds which are theologically indefensible, and form part of a deliberate campaign against the Catholic doctrine of Sacramental Grace. By canonical obedience is meant obedience according to the rules or canons of the Church. The bishop is bound by those canons, just as a judge is bound by statute law,

or an officer in the Army is bound by the King's Regulations. The root difficulty of the situation lies in the fact, that while there is an appeal from the judge to a higher legal court, and from the officer to a higher military court, there is no appeal from the bishop to a higher Church court, but only to the Privy Council, a secular authority which Catholics cannot recognize on matters of doctrine. It will not have escaped the attention of the reader that both clergy and laity in Birmingham have appealed in their difficulties to successive Archbishops of Canterbury, neither of whom felt it possible to intervene in the dispute. The resultant situation is that the bishop is free while the priest is bound. The priest is called upon to render a blind and unconditional obedience, while the bishop may, at his good pleasure, defy, or ignore, or revoke the traditional laws and usages of the Catholic Church. We have no wish to fan into fiercer flame the fires of this most unhappy conflict, but we think it right to say plainly that so long as this spirit underlies the policy of the Bishop of Birmingham, there can never be a satisfactory settlement of our difficulties. We cannot possibly recognize the right of an individual bishop to exercise autocratic powers, and, setting himself against the whole body of the Catholic Episcopate throughout the world, to enunciate a different law for his own diocese. If he does,

he forfeits all reasonable claim to the obedience of the faithful, and he certainly will never obtain it.

Finally we would say a word about the title 'Rebels.' This name was first publicly applied to us by Dr. Barnes ; it has been repeated by him on many occasions, and has become familiar to the public by head-lines in the Press. According to the generally-accepted definition, a rebel is one who acts in defiance of lawful and constitutional authority. We believe that any unprejudiced reader of this book will hold us justified in repudiating that grievous accusation. We would once more draw attention to the point at issue, even at the risk of labouring it. The lawful and constitutional authority against which we are accused of rebelling must be either the law of the Church or the law of the State, and not the arbitrary and personal opinions of Dr. Barnes. As to the law of the Church, it must be sufficient to point out that, even if it be argued that the well-known canon which orders Reservation, and which has never been repealed, fell into disuse after the Reformation, the right to reserve the Holy Sacrament has during the last few years been reaffirmed by the House of Bishops with only six dissentients, by the Lower Houses of Convocation and by the Church Assembly by very large majorities ; and that their action has been approved by almost every diocesan conference in

England, including the diocesan conference of Birmingham. As to the law of the State, it is our English tradition that a man must be assumed to be innocent until he has been proved guilty in a court of law, and that has not yet happened in our case.

It was once said of General Lee, that if people persisted in calling him a traitor, it would be necessary to find a new word to mean what 'traitor' means now. In a similar way, if the term 'rebel' is constantly applied to those who refuse to submit to an arbitrary and unconstitutional exercise of authority, it may in the course of time become a word of honourable distinction. Meanwhile it remains an opprobrious term which tends to prejudice public opinion against us, and we disclaim it on behalf of ourselves and our people.

We do not claim that in the conduct of this dispute we have been entirely without blame, that we invariably took the right action or spoke the right word. But we honestly tried to face each situation as it arose, with a single-minded desire to meet it in a spirit of respect and obedience, and to make any sacrifice for peace that did not mean the sacrifice of our convictions. If it appears to the reader that at times we failed in maintaining a spirit of Christian charity, we may venture to plead that it was in the face of almost irresistible

provocation. It is true of us now, as it has been throughout, that we earnestly desire, and are ready to do everything in our power to promote, a settlement of this miserable controversy, so that we may be set free to devote ourselves without distraction to our true work, the conversion of souls to Jesus Christ and the extension of His kingdom in Birmingham.

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